THE STORY OF GEORGE FOX

RUFUS M. JONES

R. H. Miller.

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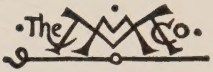
Great Leaders Series

Edited by E. Hershey Sneath, Ph.D., LL.D.
Yale University

THE STORY OF GEORGE FOX



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THE STORY OF GEORGE FOX

BY

RUFUS M. JONES

AUTHOR OF "ST. PAUL THE HERO," "HEBREW HEROES," ETC.

New York

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE "Great Leaders Series" aims to meet the needs of moral and religious secondary education. Adolescence is pre-eminently the period of Idealism. The naïve obedience to authority characteristic of childhood is to a large extent supplanted at this time by self-initiative; — by self-determination in accordance with ideals adopted or framed by the individual himself. Furthermore, the ideals of this period are concrete rather than abstract. They are embodied in individual lives, and, generally, in lives of action. Hence biographies of great leaders appeal strongly to the adolescent. They furnish examples and stimulus for conduct along the higher lines. The "Great Leaders Series" will include a large number of volumes devoted to the study of some of the greatest moral and spiritual leaders of the race. Although designed primarily for use in the class-room, they will serve admirably the purposes of a general course of reading in biography for youth.

E. HERSHEY SNEATH.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting periods of all English History is the period of the Commonwealth—in round numbers, 1640 to 1660. Great deeds were done then; great persons lived; great battles were fought; great writers wrote immortal books; great achievements were made for human freedom and a great awakening came to men's souls. Many of the noble figures and leaders of that age were young men, in the early bloom and vigor of their lives. It was a time of sunrise and promise and enthusiasm, and so it makes its perennial appeal of interest to those who are young. Milton and Cromwell, two of the greatest names in this famous epoch, are known to all my young readers, but George Fox, the hero of this story, is perhaps not so well known. His *Journal*, in which he told his own story, is very long and some parts of it not easy to read. Much has been written about him in large historical books and in big religious treatises, but not much has been written about his life in the manner and style that appeals to young people. If I have succeeded in making his life clear and vivid and real I know that you,

my young readers, will like him, as I do, and will feel a warm interest in him.

He was an unusual person, different from others as a boy, and he remained different from others in his older years. He had almost no education. He never learned how to write well; nor could he spell correctly—a thing which most persons in his time had not learned to do. He lacked the skill and refinement which a good school might have given him. But in spite of his peculiarities and this lack of education he knew and loved outdoor Nature; he possessed great native gifts; he read the Bible until he almost knew it by heart; he had an honest, sincere soul; he was a born leader of men; he had a most remarkable experience of God; he was ready to go through fire and water to perform his duty, and he won the love of men in an extraordinary way, somewhat as did St. Francis of Assisi, more than four centuries earlier.

There are all kinds of heroes, but every hero, to be a hero, must face danger bravely. He must forget himself and live greatly for others. He must win for the race something that has not been won before. He must act so as to make his life and deeds an inspiration to those around him and to those who come after him. On all these counts I think you will agree with me that George Fox was a hero. One trouble with us, both young

and old, is that we are inclined to take the easy way of doing what others do, of sliding along the smooth path that people in general take, of going with the crowd, and of having little power of *decision*, and manly choice of will. It is worth while to stop now and then and read about one who could stand out alone and decide for himself what he believed was right; who had a moral backbone in his frame and who did not say things or do things just because that would make him popular and give him an easy time. The greatest thing about George Fox, and the most heroic thing, was his conviction of duty and his obedience to it. He seemed to hear a voice speaking in his soul, and when once he felt sure what course that voice inside pointed out, he took it forthwith, in spite of all obstacles and in the face of difficulties and dangers. In this respect he was like a still greater hero—St. Paul, who was "ready" at any moment to face danger or death and who could not be turned aside from the path which his soul's vision marked out for him. "I am ready," he told his friends, "not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the cause of the Lord Jesus." That was George Fox's way, as you will see, and he, therefore, proved to be a difficult man to bend or conquer! But it was not in his own strength that he was strong; it was through what he calls "the mighty power of God". "Love the

truth more than all," he used to say, "and go on in the mighty power of God as good soldiers of Christ." "Every one who confronted him personally," Professor William James of Harvard wrote about Fox, "from Oliver Cromwell down to magistrates and jailers, seems to have acknowledged his superior power." I hope that this short book may explain to you how he came to have this "superior power."

THE STORY OF GEORGE FOX

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CHAPTER I

THE DRAYTON BOY

George Fox was born in the little hamlet of Fenny Drayton, which his autobiography, the *Journal*, calls "Drayton-in-the-clay," on the western edge of Leicestershire, England, in the year 1624. Two hundred and seventy-five years ago, when George was a youth, the country about Drayton formed a narrow strip of low, undrained, clay-formed, fen land, with lines of hills running north and south, both on the east and on the west of the hamlet. Bosworth-field where Henry of Richmond plucked the English crown from the head of Richard III., lies close to Fenny Drayton and only two or three miles away is the old town of Nuneaton where "George Eliot" was born. All the region about Nuneaton is thick with scenes made memorable in the early stories of this famous novelist, who was very unlike the George who was born in nearby Drayton.

The actual house in which George Fox was born has fallen into ruins and disappeared, though

the church where he went every week as a boy still stands, but little changed in the almost three centuries that have passed. The solemn yew trees in the yard in front of the church look very much as they did when the tiny baby was brought there to be christened in 1624. The old manor-house of the Drayton squires, the noted Purefoy family, is also much the same as when the quiet, meditative boy watched the aristocratic family, with their boys and girls, come through their private door into the little church where he was sitting.

While we are trying to imagine the Drayton church, with its Norman doorway, the two aisles and chancel, and its monuments to the famous Purefoys, we may as well try to think at the same time what the sermons were like in those distant days. While little George was growing up from childhood to youth England was becoming every year more strongly Puritan. England had, a hundred years before, in the time of the Reformation, broken away from the old historic Roman Catholic Church and had established its own English Church, with the King at its head in place of the Pope. But the new Church was too much like the old one to suit some of the men and women of England. There were persons in all parts of the country who wanted a great many more changes made. These people wanted to

have the Church "purified" so that it would be more like the Church which they thought Christ had meant to create in the world. These stout Puritans not only wanted to change the Church, they also desired to change the state so that there would be more freedom and greater liberty for everybody. It seemed to them that James I. and still more Charles I., the new Stuart kings who came from Scotland to the throne after Queen Elizabeth, were taking away the hard-won rights and privileges of the English people. When George Fox was eighteen years old the Puritan party came into open conflict with the king and a great civil war was begun on the green fields of England between the Puritan forces and the Royalist forces.

Two years before the beginning of the Civil War (1640) a new minister had come to the Drayton church, to preach to the people of the hamlet. His name was Nathaniel Stephens. He was thirty-four years old, a fine scholar from Oxford and a strong Puritan who knew exactly what he believed. Like most of the Puritan ministers of the time, he preached very long sermons and prayed long prayers. When he began to preach he started an hourglass running and, when the sand had all run out, he turned it again and went right on preaching, without thinking how tired the little boys' legs were in the hard pews. Like all the

other Puritan ministers then, he preached almost every Sunday about Adam's "fall," and the sin, guilt and wickedness of all men, women and children in the world. He made life seem dark, sad and hard. He told his hearers in the Drayton church, over and over again, that God had chosen some people to be saved and some people to be lost; that even little children would be lost, if they were not "elected" to be saved, and then they would suffer forever and ever in hell with the wicked fallen angels. "Priest Stephens," as George Fox always calls him, could talk for hours at a time of the way of escape from the "City of Destruction" to the "Celestial City," about which Bunyan wrote, and everybody learned to know what he was going to say as they heard him read his text from the great Bible on his pulpit desk. George, even while he was still very young, did not enjoy these sermons. They did not seem to him to fit what Jesus said in the gospels. He did not believe that God ever chose anybody to be lost. He did not think that it was Adam who made people do wrong; if they sinned it was their own fault. He could not see that these long sermons which the Puritan preacher gave them every Sunday made the people of Fenny Drayton any better or any more Christlike than they were before they heard his sad, solemn and tedious talk. But even if George did not believe all that "Priest

Stephens" said in his long hourglass sermons, and did not enjoy hearing so much about "Adam," and "sin," and "elected," and "lost," at least these sermons set him to thinking, made him a quiet, solemn boy, and started him off on a new track, so that in the course of time, as we shall see, he became a new kind of hero.

The father and mother of George Fox were poor, humble, hardworking people, but they were brave, upright and good. The father's name was Christopher, whom the neighbors called "righteous Christer," because he was absolutely straight and honest in his dealings. He was a weaver and worked with his hand loom in the little cottage where George was born. His mother's name was Mary Lago, who came of a family that already had its list of martyrs. She was different from the other women in Drayton—more educated and more finely cultivated—and though her surroundings were hard and mean, and her days were full of work, she was pure, lovely and noble-minded, and she knew how to understand, help and direct her unusual boy. His mother died in 1664 when George Fox was fifty years old. When the news of her death reached him he went to a room in the inn where he was staying and sat alone in the stillness and thought of all her life had meant to him. As he sat alone with his sorrow and knew that he could never see his

mother again on earth, suddenly he seemed to see her still alive with God in the eternal world and, as he says, "everlastingly with me over all." "I did verily love her as ever one could a mother," is his simple, beautiful word about her, "for she was a good, honest, virtuous, right-natured woman." As had been the case with Martin Luther, a hundred and fifty years earlier, here, again, was just the right kind of home and the fitting kind of father and mother to produce a new prophet who could be a leader of men.

George was an odd, strange boy. He did not play games like other boys. He lived apart and wandered about alone, shy, grave and thoughtful, always "wondering." William Penn, who later knew him better than almost anyone else, says: "From a child he appeared of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren: being more religious, inward, still, solid and observing beyond his years." He asked many questions and often sat alone, thinking and thinking. His great desire, even as a little boy, was to be pure and good, and he seems to have succeeded, for he says in his *Journal*, "When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness." The thing which made him most different from the other people around him was that he was so unusually *honest* about everything he did. He seems to have got this trait from both his father and his mother.

He never could *pretend*. He would not act as though he knew unless he really did know. He would not make believe he had something unless in very fact he had it. Even as a little boy he hated sham more than he hated anything else on earth. He was resolved that if he was going to live at all he would live a sincere life. We shall see that whatever else he is doing he is always trying to be genuine.

While still hardly more than a boy he went to work for a man who was a shoemaker by trade. This shoemaker also kept sheep and cattle and George not only learned to cut out leather and to sew and peg shoes, but he also tended the sheep, washed and sheared them and helped sell the wool in market. His work with the sheep took him out into the fields and pastures where he was alone with nature and where he learned to love everything God had made and to feel himself, as he puts it, "in unity with the creation."

Nature in the fields and hills and sky seemed to him full of beauty and order; what he could not understand was why men's lives were not more beautiful and orderly, as God meant them to be. He "wondered" over this problem more than over any thing else. Why, he asked again and again, are people so light and wanton? What makes them so hard and unkind to one another and to God's creatures? Why should they love to do

wrong and spoil life which was intended to be always fair and joyous and beautiful? "Priest Stephens" kept saying in his sermons that it was all because Adam sinned and the world was ruined by the fall. But when the minister told them how to escape from sin, and how to be saved from it, why didn't they stop sinning and become pure and good? They acted as though they supposed that it was enough just to listen to the sermons, without doing anything more, or without changing their lives in any way. Religion was, thus, like having money put away in a bank and never using it. It seemed to George to be something that you heard about and talked about in a church, but not something that made any difference in the way you lived after you went home from church. He had an interesting word for that kind of a religious person. He called him a "professor," i. e., one who professes to believe the things which are preached in church, but who lives in the world exactly as though he did *not* believe them.

One day all this about which he had long been thinking came sweeping over George's sensitive soul with such a rush that it almost overwhelmed him. He had gone to a market-fair in a nearby town and two "professors," one of them being George's cousin, asked him to go with them to an inn and drink beer. The two "professors" drank many mugs of beer and when George refused to

drink with them they tried to make him pay for what they drank. It shocked the gentle youth to see two persons who professed to be good Christians, guzzling beer and acting as though they had no religion at all, and thereupon he put down a small piece of money, and walked out of the inn, and left the "professors" there alone.

When he got home to Drayton he could not get this scene in the inn out of mind. It seemed to him only a vivid illustration of the way everybody was doing. The world seemed twisted and out of joint. People said one thing and did another. Religion looked like a hollow sham, a thing for show, not for daily practice. Poor, honest-hearted, pure-minded George Fox could not stand the discovery. It crushed his soul and broke his spirit. He could not sleep. He could not eat. He moaned and cried and wandered about alone, trying to understand the strange, wilderness world he was in. At length he decided to leave his home—it seemed as though God sent him out—and to go up and down the land seeking for light and endeavoring to find some help for his disturbed soul. He went out into the mysterious world not knowing whither he went, but resolved to see if he could discover anywhere any *real religion which made people's lives right, and gave them power to live by.*

CHAPTER II

THE YOUTH SEEKING FOR LIGHT

If George Fox had not been different from other boys he would very quickly have got over his strange sorrow on account of other people's shams. He would not have allowed that to spoil his appetite and disturb his sleep. But he *was* different from other boys and he could not get over his sorrow and depression. The world seemed one great question-mark to him and he didn't care about living if he could not find an answer to his mysteries. He was nineteen years old when, in 1643, he started out on his wanderings. He went to a great many English towns, and he seems to have tried in each place to find somebody who could help him out of his darkness into light. He had heard that there were people scattered over England, in out-of-the-way places, who were discovering new truth about God and man and life and the Church of Christ, and he hoped that he might fall in with some person or persons who could set him on the right track. England was seething with eagerness and enthusiasm. Religion was the main business and the great matter. George Fox was not the only one who was endeavoring

then to find a fresh way of life. It was a seeking age and all sorts of new ideas were in the air, like thistle-down in autumn. Drayton was a little hamlet, and nobody came there with new thoughts and fresh truth. If George was to discover anything deep enough and great enough to satisfy his perplexed soul he knew that he must go out and hunt for it. And hunt he surely did! Everybody who was serious then was reading the Bible. Only a little while before this, in 1611, it had been translated into the wonderful English of the King James version. There was no other book like it. It was the most interesting one that had ever been put into a boy's hand and George, like all other serious persons then, was reading and rereading it. Often in his lonely room in some town, where he knew nobody, he would read and meditate till the sun went down. Other times he would walk in the fields, which he loved with a kind of poetic passion, and sit in hollow trees, or on the sheltered bank of a brook, and read the book that told him about God and man's true life.

In his travels in pursuit of truth he went to London. But it seemed like a great, dark Babylon to him. He could find everything there but the one thing he was seeking. The city was full of interesting sights and wonderful things, but he could not find there any guide for his soul. He had an uncle, named Pickering, in London, who

was a Baptist, but though the uncle and his Baptist friends were "tender"—by which word George Fox means serious, spiritual, earnest, sincere, devout—George felt that he could not get any help from them. He found that he could not talk freely with them about his condition, that they did not understand his troubles and that he could not join with them. London had no message of light for him. John Milton was there and John Pim was there,—two Johns who were "well-beloved disciples of liberty,"—and the great Oliver, but even if he had found them they could not have helped him in his difficult quest.

He heard that his parents and other relatives were troubled over his absence from home and so he came back from London to Fenny Drayton. Some of his relatives who did not understand him advised him to take a bride, as the same kind of people once told St. Francis of Assisi to do, but George told them he was seeking for wisdom and not for a wife! Others urged him to become a soldier and take his part in the civil war, but he felt that fighting with swords would not cure his soul or remove his load of trouble. At Drayton he talked much with "Priest Stephens" who sometimes preached on Sunday the things which he had heard George say during the week, but the Puritan minister had no message of help for "Righteous Christer's" son. He was to George only a

"professor," and not a "tender" man, nor a real guide of souls.

He tried many other "priests" in the neighboring towns, in the hope that they might have more light than the Drayton minister could give him, but they proved to be no better than he. One told him to try tobacco, another advised him to sing hymns. Some got angry with him and some made fun of him. But in one thing they were all alike, they had no light for him; they all seemed to him "miserable comforters." He walked seven miles to consult a priest at Tamworth, but he found him to be like the rest, "a hollow, empty cask," without anything inside.

His sorrow and depression went so deep into his soul that it finally broke down his health and brought him into a dangerous physical and mental condition. He was a poor forlorn soul in a world of utter mystery. But it is sometimes darkest just before dawn, and so it proved to be now in George's case. Two years he had wandered about without any relief to his mind. He had found the ministers in the churches much more "empty" than he had expected to find them. He discovered nobody who seemed to be a real prophet and could speak living words of truth for God. But gradually, in 1646, he began to realize that God himself was speaking to him in his own soul. Truths seemed to flash into his mind, like wavy stream-

ers of northern lights. He would suddenly *see* a truth as though electric signs were signaled to him from a central station. It dawned upon him that God was the same now as when He revealed messages to prophets in olden times and could still reveal His will. He saw that temples and churches were not the most holy places; the soul of man itself was the really holy place, for God and man could meet therein. He saw that any man could be a priest if he only learned how to hear the voice of God within his soul and to obey it, and could tell others how to hear it and understand it. To do this one would not need to study theology for years and years in a university; it would only be necessary that one should be quick and sensitive to hear the divine voice in the soul and be ready and eager to *do* what God revealed there.

As these truths flashed into George Fox's inner soul they gave him thrills of joy and relieved him, while they lasted, of his depression. But he was not yet sure enough of his new discovery to believe in it all the time. It would come in happy moments and then slip away and leave him discouraged again. It was a kind of a seesaw life, now up in the heights of vision and now down in the flats of life with no blue sky in sight. The same old wanderings continued, as though he were on a new quest for the Holy Grail; the search for helpers went on and the restless youth pored over

the pages of his Bible, until he knew them almost or quite by heart. At last, one great and memorable day, he discovered something which lasted; he saw a truth which did not vanish away. He saw that Jesus Christ who lived in Palestine centuries ago and helped men out of their sin and weakness, their sorrow and trouble, was still alive and unchanged in love and goodness. The only difference was that then He walked about in a body like other men and could be in only one place at one time, now He came as a Spirit within the soul and could be in all places at once, helping and healing, comforting and blessing all who needed Him, just as thousands of people at the same time can all have the warmth and light of the one sun.

In the stillness of his soul George Fox heard Christ speaking to him so clearly that he could not mistake it. "I heard a voice," he wrote in his *Journal*, "which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." He felt now that he knew Christ in the same way that one knows a human friend. He had met Him; he had found Him. It was an experience and not a guess. The Holy Grail, then, was to be found within, and not in a distant country. It was as though he now had a pass key, a master key, which would open any door where he wanted to enter. He had discovered something better than men, better than

priests, better than books—the living Christ who could speak and teach and live in his own heart, just as the light and heat and power of the distant sun can be present here on the earth, where we need light and heat and power.

Nobody can correctly understand George Fox and nobody can properly read the story of his remarkable life of heroism without hearing first what happened in his soul. We are so used to having all our stories tell about things that happen in the world which we see with our eyes that it will seem odd to begin with this other kind of story, of what took place inside where there were no windows for any one to look in.

Most of our heroes just do things, and we read about their deeds and are thrilled. Here we have a hero who cared more about *being* than about *doing*. It seemed to him no use to go out and do a lot of things if your soul was all wrong and your life all twisted out of shape. That was just the kind of sham which he hated most. He wanted to be so clear and transparent that if men, or even God, looked through him there would be only fair and beautiful things to see in the inside part of himself where he *lived*.

Something like having God look through him did happen to George Fox. He thought he heard God say to him: "My love was always to thee and thou art in my love," and another time when he

was walking in the fields, which always seemed full of God, he heard a voice that said, "Thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life." Nothing else in the universe seemed so certain to him as the love of God. He might lose his eyes, as John Milton had done, and then he would not be able to see the hills and trees and sky, but he could not lose his real, inside eyes which saw the infinite love of God. He knew there was evil in the world; that there were pain, sorrow and death; but greater than all these was the God who still loved and, in the end, would conquer. He says: "I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that I saw the infinite love of God."

Of course a man who sees a thing like that can be brave. Nothing on earth can defeat him, or conquer him. He has the key of his destiny in his own hand.

CHAPTER III

GATHERING THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

At first, after he had made his great discovery of the living Christ, George Fox did not yet know what he should do next. He had made no plan for his life. In his lonely wanderings he had hoped to find a people that had real spiritual religion and he had expected to join with them and live among them, if he ever found them. But now that, alone by himself, and without any human teacher to help him, he had found what he was seeking, the feeling soon broke in upon his mind that he ought to go forth into the world and tell everybody, who would listen, about the light and life of God in the soul of man.

Before he was well started on his mission, however, he had two moments of hesitation. One moment of hesitation came to him as he was walking through the beautiful Vale of Belvoir (which he calls the "Vale of Beavor"). In the midst of the beauty and glory of this valley he began to "wonder," as so many other persons have done, whether, after all, everything in the world had not come by "Nature," by a simple, natural process. Is not, perhaps, Nature its own author, its

own maker and builder? Do not all things form and shape themselves from elements that were always there and that possess the power of changing into other things? Are not the stars vital substances which send out seeds of life to the earth, and even emit these souls of ours that shape for themselves bodies to live in? If this were so, then, there might not be any God. All things just came! This idea got hold of George's thoughts there in beautiful "Beavor," as he slowly footed the winding road, and all his mind was clouded with doubts. There was no mission in the world for him, if God was not real. He could not preach about elements! All his high hopes and his new joy must vanish if the universe was nothing but natural matter with no inner Soul! He did now what he always did when he was in trouble, he sat down in the quiet and stillness, and waited for the Voice within him to speak. He hushed his arguments, he stopped his "wonderings," and just listened, like Elijah when the still small voice came to him. In a few minutes, a living hope arose within him and a true voice said, 'There *is* a living God who made all things,' and Fox adds, "My cloud vanished away, and life rose over it all; my heart was glad and I praised the living God."

The other moment of hesitation was not because of doubts which he had, but because the

whole creation seemed to open its meaning and its secrets to him. It suddenly seemed as though he could see through everything and understand it all. "The creation was opened to me," he says. "All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell." "I saw the nature and virtues of things." It was as though he had passed up through the flaming sword of the Cherubim and had come into paradise and was like Adam before he fell, who could talk face to face with God and could see the natures of all things and give them their names and knew only purity and peace and joy. In this moment of rapture Fox wondered whether he should not go out and practice medicine to heal the wounds and pains and ills of the world, since "the creation was opened" to him so that he could discover all the healing virtues of things! But it soon grew clear to him that his work in the world was not to doctor men's bodies, but to help them find God and to cure their souls and to live pure lives. "The Lord," he says, "sent me forth to preach His everlasting gospel" —"to declare truth." In "powerful and piercing words" he began telling little groups of people, who had passed through experiences something like his own, about the living Christ who reveals His light and life and love in the soul of man. He opened his work of ministry in a very quiet way in the midland counties of England—Leicestershire, War-

wickshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. One of his very first followers and disciples was a woman named Elizabeth Hooton who lived at Skegby, near Mansfield, where a small group of persons accepted his teaching. Fox himself says that "the Lord's power wrought mightily and gathered many of them," and he also says that "the Lord's power was wonderfully manifested at Mansfield and other towns thereabouts." Here the people who gathered around him, and were separated from the churches, came at first to be called "the Children of the Light," though they soon called themselves "Friends."

Fox's preaching in these early days was very simple and quite different from that in the Puritan churches. He asked people to stop arguing about Christ and turn their attention to the light of Christ in their own souls, to sit still and listen and to let God's grace and power work within them. Above everything else he told all his hearers that they must get all shams out of their lives. They must be what they professed to be and they must carry out all the truth which they discovered into action in daily life. They must stop being insincere. When they said anything they must *mean* it.

Fox himself gave up observing all fashions and manners, customs and conventions which he thought had become hollow, empty and meaning-

less. He resolved that he would not do anything for mere show. "When the Lord sent me forth into the world," he wrote in his *Journal*, "He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low; and I was required to say Thee and Thou to all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small." He made a great point of treating everybody alike, of showing as much respect to a poor person that labored with his hands as to the wealthiest person who had everything done for him. He maintained that in the sight of God all were alike and all were precious. He wanted to spread in the world a religion and a way of life which would give everyone everywhere a full chance to be the kind of person God in the creation meant him to be. He hoped, too, to change all hard customs, unfair laws and unjust systems which kept men bound and cramped and to help bring in a condition of things more like the Kingdom of God which Christ talked about.

George Fox quickly found out how difficult it is to change the world and how much suffering it costs to live differently and to act differently from the way people in general live and act. He never stopped to consider the easy way. He challenged what seemed to him wrong regardless of what might happen. He got his first taste of the kind of suffering that was to come to him all the rest

of his life in the town of Nottingham, one Sunday morning in 1649. He was walking along the high road, when from a hill-top he saw the spire of St. Mary's church. He could not bear the sight of church-spires. They seemed to him unnecessary, useless and made for show. He had formed a great dislike of the Church as it was in his day, of the preaching which people had to listen to in the churches, and especially of the ministers who were, he thought, hollow and empty. When he saw a spire it aroused all his deep feelings of dislike. The church-spire seemed to him to be the focus of the entire system which he disapproved. He had not yet quite learned to control himself and to see there was something true even in things which he disliked. As he caught sight of this Nottingham spire something powerfully moved him to go and "cry out against" what was going on in that church. When he got there he thought that the minister looked dull and stupid "like a lump of earth." So he himself began to tell the people in the church that God was ready to speak in their own souls; that if they would listen to Him and obey His voice the full day of life and glory would dawn in their own hearts and the day-star would arise in their souls and they would be able to understand God's living Word and serve Him without the help of priest and without long and tedious sermons.

Quite naturally the minister did not like the interruption of his service, though the people who heard the stranger's words were amazed and could not for a long time "get them out of their ears." But while Fox was still speaking, some officers came up behind and seized him and put him in a nasty, foul-smelling prison. The head sheriff, named John Reckless, who had charge of him, was convinced of the truth which Fox preached about God and he and his entire family were changed and became "Children of the Light," and many others became "tender" when they felt the power of God break forth through his life and his words. A man whose soul had been touched came and offered to take George Fox's place in the prison and to suffer instead of him, if the judges would let Fox go. He was soon released from his first imprisonment without any substitute and allowed to go on his way in freedom.

This experience in Nottingham had not made him any more careful or cautious. He was just as ready as before to cry out against things which he believed to be wrong or a sham. Coming into Mansfield-Woodhouse, where he calmed "a distracted woman" who was "mended by the Lord's power" and became one of the "Children of the Light," Fox was "moved to go to the steeple-house," as he always called the church building, and "declare truth there." The people in this

church did not wait for the officers. In Fox's own account of the affair, he says: "The people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down and almost stifled and smothered me; and I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, Bibles and sticks. Then they haled me out, though I was hardly able to stand, and put me into the stocks; and they brought dog-whips and horse-whips, threatening to whip me." Finally, he says, "the rude people stoned me out of the town for preaching the word of life to them," "but the Lord's power soon healed me again. That day some people were convinced of the Lord's truth and turned to His teaching."

At every town where he came in his travels some people were "convinced" and the more he was attacked and beaten the more people believed in his truth. In Market-Bosworth he was stoned out of the town, but some people were "loving" and others were "confirmed." An incident occurred at Twy-Cross which shows the heroic stuff and fiber of Fox's spirit. While he was visiting "a great man of the town," who was lying dangerously ill and needed spiritual help, a serving-man in the house came running out of a room with a naked rapier in his hand and, in a wild, mad way, threatened to thrust it into Fox's side. George says in his *Journal:* "I looked steadfastly on him and said, 'Alack for thee, poor creature! what wilt

thou do with thy carnal weapon; it is no more to me than a straw.'"

At length in his journeyings he came to Derby where he was to spend a whole year in prison for "declaring truth." It all came from his bold and unrestrained method of "crying out against" the things which "struck at his life." He went to the Derby "steeple-house" on "a great lecture day," when distinguished vistors were preaching there, and after they had finished, Fox rose and gave them his message, which he believed was from the Lord. They at once arrested him and brought him before the magistrates, where he spoke with unusual boldness of the living Christ and of the triumphant life when Christ lives in an obedient man. It seemed to the magistrates too bold. They called it "blasphemy," against which there was a law, and they committed George Fox to the Derby jail for six months.

While he was in the jail Fox had many visitors who came to ask him for help, or to discuss religious questions with him. He wrote a great many papers and letters, explaining to the world his teachings and his practices and his desire for a better world. The keeper of the jail, who at first was very hard against him, became completely changed and very "tender." One evening George overheard the jailer say to his wife: "Wife, I have seen the day of judgment, and I saw George

there, and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and spoken so much against him to the ministers and professors, and to the justices and in taverns and ale-houses." A little later he came into Fox's room and said to him: "I have been as a lion against you; but now I come like a lamb, and like the jailer that came to Paul and Silas trembling." He asked if he might come and live in the room with Fox, and so it was arranged for the strange prisoner and his jailer to live together in the jail!

The judges, too, were much impressed with the character and spirit of the prisoner. They tried to contrive some plan to set him free and to get him out of the jail, though they did not like to say that they were sorry for having put him in. They told him that he might have liberty to walk a mile in any direction he pleased, but George declined to take any walks until they had measured off an exact mile. When he did walk out on his mile trips, he went into the streets and market of Derby and "warned the people to repent of wickedness."

It was here in Derby that the "Children of the Light" were first called "Quakers." One day in 1650 when George Fox was in the Court and Justice Bennett, a distinguished judge, was questioning him, Fox declared that the time had come for men to quake and tremble before the Lord, and the

Judge used words something like this, "So you are 'quakers' are you?" and the name stuck and soon came into general use.

When the six months of the sentence were nearly expired some army commissioners came to the jail and tried to get George Fox to join the army of the Commonwealth and they promised to make him a captain. He told the commissioners that he was against all wars and could not fight with arms against anybody. He said that he was living "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion for all wars." What he said to the commissioners so offended them that their "rage got up," and they ordered the jailer to put him into the "dungeon among the rogues and felons." "So I was had away," the *Journal* says, "and put into a lousy, stinking place, without any bed, amongst thirty felons, where I was kept almost half a year."

He was deeply affected by the evil condition of the prisoners in the dungeon and he wrote letters to the justices, showing them how hurtful it was to keep men in jails where they learned wickedness and became brutalized and much worse than they were before. He pleaded for a change in the laws which put men to death for small crimes and petty offenses. His tender heart was especially touched by the case of one poor woman in the jail who was to be executed for stealing.

She was finally saved from the gallows and "became convinced of God's everlasting truth"—that is, she became one of "the Children of the Light."

One day a "conjuror" who was in the jail frightened everybody, even the jailer himself, by threatening to raise the Devil and break down the house. It was an age when almost everybody believed in the power of witchcraft. Fox was not so easily scared. He says: "I was moved of the Lord to go in His power and rebuke him and say unto him: 'Come let us see what thou canst do; do thy worst!' I told him the Devil was raised high enough in him already, but the power of God chained him down: so he slunk away from me."

George's relatives had tried in vain to get him out of the jail, for he would not budge until the magistrates who put him in were ready of their own accord to come and take him out. That is what they finally decided to do. In the winter of 1651, after having passed six months in the common jail and six more months in the felon's dungeon, the magistrates opened his prison door and set him at liberty.

CHAPTER IV

A GREAT PEOPLE TO BE GATHERED

It will already have been discovered that George Fox was an unusual person. He was, as William Penn once said, "an original" and "no man's copy." It was impossible to foretell what he would do, for he did not take to the old ruts of custom or the formed grooves of habit. He cut out an unused path and marked a new course. And, in doing it, he never stopped to count the cost or to consider the abuse it might bring. He went forward and acted. Sometimes he made mistakes and took a false start and had to learn through bitter experience where the right road really was, but he was always trying to follow a divine light, and everybody could be sure that he was sincere, honest and brave.

He was a striking, impressive man to look at. There was a certain majesty about his presence, his friend William Penn tells us. His eyes possessed an extraordinary power and seemed to look right through a person. "Take thy eyes off me; they pierce me!" one man cried out as Fox steadily gazed at him. Ministers were often afraid to face him. When Francis Howgill saw

Fox look in on him through the door of Firbank Chapel as Howgill was trying to preach, he was so embarrassed that, he says, any one could have killed him with a crab apple! Again and again fierce opponents wilted down in debate when they saw this calm, serene man in front of them. The Cambridge students endeavored to pull him off his horse when Fox came to their University town with his message, but they could not unhorse him. "I kept on my horse's back," he says, "and rid through them in the Lord's power. Oh! said they, he shines: he glisters." After he had spoken in Beverley Minster, a great lady of Beverley told Justice Hotham of that town that "an Angel or Spirit came into the church at Beverley and spoke the wonderful things of God, to the astonishment of all that were there: and when *it* had done, *it* passed away, and they did not know whence *it* came or whither *it* went; but *it* astonished all, priests, professors and magistrates."

He wore leather breeches and a leather doublet, not in order to be odd and queer, but because these were the best and most durable clothes for one who traveled in all weathers and had to sleep often under hedges and haystacks and needed garments that were both stout and warm. His clothes were fastened with "alchemy buttons," that is, buttons made of composition metal, and he was very particular to have good, clean linen.

His hair was thick and long, with a strong tendency to curl at the ends. He wore his hat under all circumstances. He could endure fatigue, labor, travel, beatings, lack of food, cold, wet, and barbaric prisons. His friends loved him, as William Penn says, "with an unfeigned and unfading love." A Yorkshire "priest" explained why people followed the new preacher and seemed so attached to him by inventing the story that Fox carried magic bottles with him and made people drink out of them, and that was the reason why he had so many followers and friends!

Soon after he was out of Derby prison he widened out his field of labor and entered the great county of Yorkshire where he found some of the most intimate friends of his life and some of the ablest helpers in his work. On the first arrival in Yorkshire he did not meet with much kindness nor with any success. The first inn at which he stayed had no welcome for the "man in leather breeches." "I bid the woman of the house," he says in the *Journal*, "if she had any meat, to bring me some; but because I said Thee and Thou to her she looked strangely on me. Then I asked her if she had any milk; and she said, 'No.' I was sensible she spoke falsely, and being willing to try her further, I asked her if she had any cream; she denied that she had any. Now there stood a churn in the room, and a little boy playing about

it put his hands into it and pulled it down, and threw all the cream on the floor before my eyes. Thus was the woman manifested to be a liar. She was amazed and blessed herself, and taking up the child whipped it sorely; but I reproved her for her lying and deceit. After the Lord had thus discovered her deceit and perverseness, I walked out of the house, and went away until I came to a stack of hay and lay in the haystack that night in rain and snow [of course without any supper] it being three days before the time called Christmas."

The next day he tried to give his message in the great Minster at York where the people did not take him for an angel, as the great lady had done in Beverley. As soon as the words of his brief and practical message were out of his mouth, he says, "they hurried me out and threw me down the steps, but I got up again without hurt and went to my lodgings."

The first important successes which came to him in Yorkshire were in the country about Doncaster which is not far from Scrooby, where the "Pilgrim Fathers," with their great minister, John Robinson, had lived before they went to Holland and later to Massachusetts. In this region there were many persons who were seeking for fresh light, which Robinson had said was about to "break forth," and who were prepared in ad-

vance for the new preacher. They were all ready to become "Children of the Light" as soon as Fox appeared. The most important members of this group were Richard Farnsworth who became one of the leading Quakers; Thomas Aldam and his wife Mary; John and Thomas Killam and their wives Margaret and Joan. A little later two more men joined him who were to be among the most famous of all his fellow-workers, and one of them, by his sad mistakes, was to bring great trouble upon the Quaker movement. They were William Dewsbury and James Nayler, both of them former soldiers in the armies of the Civil War. Dewsbury was one of "the sweetest and wisest" of all the early Friends, who knew how to turn his prisons into palaces and the bolts and bars of his dungeon into jewels. Nayler was one of the ablest and most moving of all the Quaker preachers, and once his preaching gave one of Cromwell's officers more terror than did the battle of Dunbar. He reached great heights, he had a terrible fall and finally he finished his life with a marvelous repentance.

At Warmsworth, on this early Yorkshire visit, Fox says, "the people ran upon me and knocked me sorely with their staves, threw clods and stones at me and abused me much; the priest also, being in a great rage, laid violent hands on me himself. But I warned them and him of the terrible day of

the Lord, and exhorted them to repent and turn to Christ. Being filled with the Lord's refreshing power, I was not sensible of much hurt I had received by their blows." At Tickhill he was treated still worse. As soon as he began to speak in the "steeple-house" the people fell upon him fiercely. The *Journal* says: "The clerk took up his Bible, as I was speaking and struck me on the face with it, so that it gushed out with blood, and I bled exceedingly in the steeple-house. Then the people cried, 'Let us have him out of the Church,' and when they had got me out, they beat me exceedingly and threw me down, and over a hedge; and afterwards they dragged me through a house into the street, stoning and beating me as they drew me along, so that I was besmeared all over with blood and dirt." In the struggle he lost his precious hat, which he wore on all occasions and took off in the presence of nobody and in no building, and he had to walk eight miles to Balby without any hat!

In a town near Pickering, where there was more preaching than practice in the church, and where many people came together in large numbers to hear the preacher in leather breeches, Fox sat for some hours in absolute silence on a haystack, with the people gathered around him waiting for him to speak. He felt moved "to famish them from *words*." They kept asking him when he was

going to begin. He quietly said each time they asked, "Wait." "At last," he says, "I was moved of the Lord to speak; and they were struck by the Lord's power; the word of life reached to them, and there was a general convincement amongst them."

Thus he went on through the towns of Yorkshire, sleeping almost entirely out of doors, so that a rumor got afloat that he never used a bed; meeting often furious persecution, and, on the other hand, gaining bands of followers so devoted that they seemed to his enemies under the spell of some magic charm. In spite of the bitter opposition he was steadily gaining ground and the truth was spreading. He says that the Lord told him, in these early Yorkshire days, that "if but one man or woman were raised up by God's power, to stand and live in the same spirit that the prophets, and apostles were in, who gave forth the Scriptures, that man or woman should shake all the country in their profession for ten miles around!" which means, I suppose, that a person who has real, firsthand religious life and power will make everybody in a ten-mile radius see how different *that* is from a religion of mere empty profession.

At length in his travels, with Richard Farnsworth as his companion, George Fox came to Pendle-Hill, just across the border of Yorkshire,

in the edge of Lancashire. He calls it "a very great hill"—"very steep and high," with a wide sweep of view, all the way to "the sea bordering upon Lancashire." The Lord moved him, he says, to climb this Pendle-Hill. And on the lonely top of it, with the great stretch of the beautiful world below him, he had an inspiration and a vision: "From the top of the hill, the Lord let me see in what places He had *a great people to be gathered.*"

He had been proclaiming his message in the counties of England now for about four years, and though he had seen some striking results from his labors, the successes were on the whole slender and meager. There was little sign yet that a new religious reformation was under way or that a powerful religious Society was to be born out of the movement of which Fox was the leader. There were many little temporary sects forming in England at this time and people supposed that "the Children of the Light" was to be just one more of them. They believed that it would soon go by and vanish away. And probably it would have done so if Fox, there in the region around Pendle-Hill, had not discovered "a great people to be gathered." This was a turning point in his life and this was the great epoch in his ministry. He had hardly eaten anything or drunk anything for several days. At a spring on the side of Pendle-

Hill he now refreshed himself. That night he came to an inn and we hope that, after his long fast, he had a good supper. But, whether he had supper or not, at the inn he had a new vision, or, at least, a continuation of the vision which he had on Pendle-Hill. "Here," he says, "the Lord opened unto me, and let me see a great people in white raiment by a river side, coming to the Lord; and the place I saw them in was about Wensleydale and Sedbergh." The river of his vision, where the people in white raiment were to be gathered, was the river Rawthey, which flows through the dales near Sedbergh, or Brigflatts. In this district there were large communities of people called "Seekers." They had separated from the Church, somewhat as the "Pilgrim Fathers" at Scrooby did, and they had formed a new kind of religious meeting. It seemed to them that none of the churches in the world were like the Church of Christ in the days of the apostles, as it is described in the New Testament, and these "Seekers" wanted to bring back and restore that apostolic Church in its purity. They thought, however, that this could not be done until some new prophet or apostle should be sent by Christ, commissioned to set up the new Church and to bring in the new era. While they were waiting for the prophet of the Lord to come, they were *waiters*, or *seekers* for the Light. They often held their meetings

in silence for they did not want to speak unless they were sure God Himself gave them something to say. They had ministers in their communities but they did not think that any minister who had yet appeared had full authority and power as the apostles had. They were "waiting" in hope for an apostolic man to come to them. They were all ready to believe in him and to receive him as soon as they were convinced that he had come. George Fox, when he appeared among them, seemed to them to be the man they were waiting for, and they were quickly "gathered in," as we shall see.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW GROUP OF FRIENDS IN THE NORTH

As we have already seen, "the people in white raiment"—which is only another way of saying the people who were called to be "saints"—were the groups of "seekers" more or less gathered in little communities, in the fringe of border towns where the three counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Westmoreland join. Sedbergh was the important center in Yorkshire; Yealand and Kellet in Lancashire; Kendal, Underbarrow and Grayrigg in Westmoreland, while Firbank chapel at Preston-Patrick, not far from Kendal, was their central meeting place for their General Meeting, held once a month. As soon as they heard Fox speak his message, they felt that he "spoke with authority" and was a different type of preacher from any they had ever heard.

The first great occasion when the "Seekers" in a body heard Fox speak was the Sunday afternoon following his "vision" on Pendle-Hill. It was the time of their General Monthly Meeting at Preston-Patrick. Francis Howgill and John Audland, two of their foremost men, had spoken in Firbank chapel in the morning and Fox had looked in at

the door while Howgill was speaking, but he did not go into the chapel. He waited outside and at the close of the morning meeting he asked the throng of people to come to an afternoon meeting on the hillside. A mass of rock rises out of the fell which makes a natural pulpit, with a broad area in front admirably suited for a large group of listeners. Here in the afternoon a thousand people gathered around the rock on which Fox sat. At first there was a period of deep, intense silence and then the strange, new, prophet-like preacher rose and spoke for three hours! He told them in powerful, piercing words how different the Church in the apostles' days was from the Church in their time and he declared that Christ wanted to restore this true, living, powerful, spiritual Church. He announced, as he always did, that Christ Himself was still living, though invisible, and would be the Teacher of all who were willing and eager to hear His voice. The living Christ would feed them and guide them and reveal the truth to them and make their bodies real Temples of God. He made them see that they need no longer be "waiters" and "seekers," for the time had fully come when they could be *finders* and *possessors*. The Light of Christ, he told them, reaches every soul and the real presence of Christ spreads over every human heart. As they listened, with rapt faces, they felt the demonstration and

power of his message. It reached their hearts and they were convinced of its truth. It seemed clear that the person possessed of true apostolic power, for whom they had been waiting, was now among them, speaking to them. Many hundreds were convinced and all those who had been "teachers" in the Seekers' communities accepted the message of Fox and joined themselves to his movement. Many more meetings were held among the Seekers and many families were visited, until practically all who had formed the groups of Seekers now became "Children of the Light" and helped to form what now came to be called the Society of Friends.

From these new bands came the most important of the early Quaker preachers and leaders. We have already met Francis Howgill and John Audland who were "teachers" in the meeting at Firbank chapel. Howgill was a little older and Audland a little younger than Fox. They soon caught the same spirit and became powerful bearers of the message about the living Christ in man's soul. No less remarkable were two other publishers of the Quaker truth who came to help Fox at this time—Edward Burrough and John Camm. Burrough was only nineteen and his life-work was to be brief, but his whole strength was "bended after God," and prisons could not daunt him nor death affright him. He was a great in-

strument in the spreading of the Quaker message. Camm was already fifty and was one of the few Quaker messengers of this early time who were not in the first flush of youth and vigor. His soul had "hungered and thirsted for truth," and now that he felt sure of having found it, he devoted himself through suffering and sacrifice, to the spreading of it. There were many besides these four full-statured preachers who possessed large gifts and who became powerful ministers with Fox in the publishing of the Quaker teaching of the Light. The most noted of them were Richard Hubberthorne, Miles Halhead, Miles Hubbersty, Robert Widders, Gervase Benson, Thomas Taylor, Ann Camm, Dorothy Waugh and Elizabeth Fletcher. They were devoted to their new leader, George Fox; they were, like him, ready to leave all, houses and lands, father and mother, friends and neighbors, to go out into "the hard and briery world" with their gospel of joy, to suffer or to die for their truth, and like "the little brothers" who gathered around St Francis of Assisi, they felt that through their new leader, they had found Christ and His joy. William Caton, who joined the band from the Swarthmore group, of which we shall soon hear, expressed the joy and thrill which they all felt. He says: "Oh, the love which in that day abounded in us, . . . and oh, the freshness of the power of the Lord God which was

amongst us, and the zeal for God and His truth, the comfort and refreshment which we had from His presence, the nearness and dearness that was amongst us one towards another." In a very short time there were no less than sixty persons who, thrilled with new life and power, were going about, as George Fox was doing, to preach and proclaim the Light and Life and Love of God revealed to men.

But there was a still more important person in this beautiful Lake District of Westmoreland who was waiting unconsciously, like the Seekers, for Fox's vital message. This was Margaret Fell of Swarthmore Hall who was one day to become Margaret Fox. Her maiden name was Askew and she came of the wealthy family at Marsh Grange in the Furness District. Some historians have thought that she was a descendant of the noble martyr, Anne Askew, but that is not likely. She must live by her own fame and not by that of a martyred ancestor. In 1658, when Margaret was about eighteen, she had married Thomas Fell, the proprietor of Swarthmore Hall, a fine old Elizabethan manor house, near the town of Ulverston. He was sixteen years older than his lovely wife, and before the arrival of Fox he had become one of the leading men in the northern counties of England. He had been a member of the Long Parliament, and he was now a prominent judge and

the holder of other honorable and distinguished positions. His work as judge took him often away from home and his capable wife had become efficient in the management of the affairs of the Hall and of the large estate. Nine children, all but one of whom were still living, seven of them daughters, had been born in Swarthmore Hall during the happy years of their married life.

Margaret Fell was a devoutly religious woman. She was a diligent attender of the Ulverston church, where "priest Lampitt" ministered, but she was not wholly satisfied with the religion of the churches and longed for a more real and intimate experience of God. She felt and thought in the secret of her heart much as "the people in white raiment" did, though she had never joined the Seeker communities. The Hall was always hospitably open to religious people and the mistress of it welcomed all traveling ministers who came that way. It was, therefore, not an unusual circumstance when a friend of the Fells brought "the man in leather breeches" to spend the night in Swarthmore Hall. Judge Fell was absent on his circuit and his wife, too, was away from home when Fox arrived, but Lampitt, the Ulverston minister, came to the Hall on the afternoon of his arrival and had a long talk and discussion with him. Fox at once took a positive dislike to Lampitt, for he had a clear sense that the Ulverston

minister was impure in his life and insincere, preaching lofty things to others but living himself in sin, and when Margaret Fell returned in the evening she found that her guest, whose name she had only recently heard, had had a vigorous discussion and a sharp disagreement with her minister.

The next day was "lecture day" in the Ulverston church and Fox was invited to hear "priest Lampitt" preach, but he chose instead to "walk in the fields," where he always seems to have felt especially near to God. He had not walked long in the fields, however, before "the word of the Lord came to him" to go to the church. They were singing a hymn as he came in, and, when the hymn was finished, Fox asked permission to speak. As Margaret Fell has given a vivid account of what happened in the church we will let her tell it: "When they had done singing, he stood up upon a seat or form, and desired that he might have liberty to speak, and he that was in the pulpit said he might. And the first words that he spoke were as followeth, 'He is not a Jew that is one outward, neither is that circumcision, which is outward; but he is a Jew that is one inward, and that is circumcision, which is of the heart.' And so he went on, and said how that Christ was the Light of the world, and lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and that by this Light they might be gathered to God. And I stood up in my

pew, and I wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on and opened up the Scriptures, and said that the Scriptures were the prophets' words and Christ's and the apostles' words; what they spoke they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord. And [he] said, 'Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this, but what canst thou say? Art thou a Child of the Light, and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from the Lord? This opened me so, that it cut me to the heart, and then I saw clearly that we were all wrong. So I sat down in my pew again, and cried bitterly: and I cried in my spirit to the Lord, 'We are all thieves, we are all thieves, *we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves.*'"

As Fox went on to describe the present condition of the Church and was pointing out how different it was from the Church in the days of the apostles, a justice of the peace, named John Sawrey, a staunch Puritan, whom Margaret Fell calls a "professor," interrupted him and told the churchwarden to take him out of the church. The churchwarden was trying to perform his disagreeable task when suddenly Margaret Fell rose up again in her pew and called out in a tone of authority,

"Let him alone, why may not he speak as well as any other?" Whereupon the churchwarden let Fox alone and Mistress Fell took him back to Swarthmore Hall in peace. That night he spoke with penetrating power to the family and servants in the Hall and they were convinced that what he said was true. Fox visited many neighboring places, everywhere gathering more followers. In the meantime James Nayler and Richard Farnsworth had come to Westmoreland to join him and they, too, helped to establish the Swarthmore Hall group in their new-found faith. The ministers of the surrounding churches and the men of the strong Puritan stamp like Justice Sawrey were much aroused at the progress which George Fox was making in their district and they resolved to set powerful Judge Fell against him. A large party of them, with captains and magistrates, went to meet the judge as he was returning from his circuit, three weeks after the arrival of Fox, and poured their tale of woe into his ears: "A fanatic, ranting preacher in leather breeches, named George Fox, had come to Swarthmore Hall and had bewitched his wife, and had bewitched his entire household. This vagrant preacher had taken away their religion and had turned them into mad Quakers. He was destroying the churches and spreading his wild ideas in every direction and he and his Quakers must be thrust out of the

district, or clapt into a dungeon at once or there would be a complete havoc of everything they loved in the country." Judge Fell was a man of strong nature and powerful will, and, as he heard this story of bewitchment, his wrath was kindled and he came riding to his greatly altered home in profound grief and anger. Nobody could foresee what would happen next.

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

Angry as he was at what was taking place in his home, Judge Fell was nevertheless a calm and sensible man. He knew and trusted his wife. He would not condemn her until he had heard her story. He was "greatly offended," but he did not lose his head. As Margaret Fell says, "he behaved moderately and wisely." She herself was in a desperate strait, for she felt sure that she must either displease her husband or disobey God and the truth. The judge was stern and quiet, and everybody could see in his hard and silent face that he did not like what had happened in his absence. James Nayler and Richard Farnsworth were in the Hall at the time and Mistress Fell asked them during the afternoon to come in and explain to her husband why they had come and what their religious faith was. Like the real man he was, Judge Fell listened quietly to them and seemed to understand their spirit. George Fox was expected that evening and everything would depend on the impression which he would make upon the judge. At evening dinner Margaret Fell began suddenly to quake and tremble, as the

early Quakers sometimes did in their meetings, and the judge was "struck with amazement," as he beheld her, "and knew not what to think, but was quiet and still." The children, too, were all altered in manner and behavior. They were all "quiet and still and grown sober, and could not play on their music." The poor judge hardly knew his own home, and he sat and wondered.

A little later George himself arrived. Mistress Fell came quietly to the parlor where the perplexed judge was sitting alone and asked if George Fox might come in and talk with him. Judge Fell said, "Yes." George came in with his hat on his head and without paying any of the customary compliments. He spoke almost at once of his mission in the world and told the judge simply and plainly the message which he preached everywhere. As he went on talking the family and servants gathered into the parlor; James Nayler and Richard Farnsworth came in and George preached on, "very excellently," Margaret Fell's account says, "as ever I heard him." "He opened Christ's and the apostles' practices which they were in, in their day. And he opened the night of apostasy, since the apostles' days, and laid open the priests and their practices in the apostasy; and if all England had been there, I thought they could not have denied the truth of those things."

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It was a great crisis in Fox's life and very much depended on the decision which the prominent judge before him should give. He was used to hearing important cases and of going straight to the central point. So now he did not allow the stories he had heard to influence him. He made nothing of the lack of formal compliments. He calmly weighed the words of the man speaking in his parlor and he believed that they were true. He said little. He went to bed "very quiet," but "he clearly saw the truth." The next morning "priest Lampitt" came and started a counter-offensive. But it was no use; it was too late. "My husband," Margaret says, "had seen so much the night before that the priest got little entrance upon him."

A little later, Judge Fell of his own accord offered the use of the Hall as a meeting place for Friends and, though he himself never joined them, he appreciated their message, he showed them much kindness, he opposed those who persecuted them and he would often sit quietly in his own room, adjoining the large meeting room of the Hall, with his door ajar, and listen to the Quaker preaching. And so until his death, a few years later, the old judge and Parliamentarian gave the new movement his respect and blessing, though he felt himself too old to change his ways and religious habits; and he let his wife and daughters

have full liberty to worship God as their hearts prompted them.

While the cause of Fox was gaining this powerful support and he was adding so many important persons to his new-born Society, his opponents were more than ever resolved to crush him and stop his influence. Justice Sawrey, "the first stirrer up of cruel persecution in the North," was the leader of the opposition forces in Westmoreland and he and others inflamed the mob-element to make Fox's work in that district henceforth impossible. The first collision of forces came at Ulverston, where Fox, with the word of God in his soul, "like a fire and a hammer," tried to preach again on a "lecture-day." Justice Sawrey roused the people to a furious rage and set them on the preacher. Fox says, "They fell on me in the steeple-house; knocked me down, kicked me and trampled upon me." After much uproar and conflict between those who opposed Fox and those who sympathized with him, he was dragged to "the common moss-side" and there beaten with staves and hedge-stakes, and with holm or holly-bushes until, unconscious, he fell down upon the wet common. "When I recovered," the *Journal* says, "and saw myself lying in a watery common, and the people standing about me, I lay still a little while; and the power of the Lord sprang through me, and the Eternal Refreshings refreshed

me, so that I stood up again in the strengthening power of the Eternal God; and stretching out my arms amongst them I said with a loud voice, 'Strike again; here are my arms, my head and my cheeks.'"

"There was in the company," the graphic account continues, "a mason, a professor, but a rude fellow; he with his walking rule-staff gave me a blow with all his might, just over the back of my hand, as it was stretched out; with which blow my hand was so bruised and my arm so benumbed, that I could not draw it unto me again; so that some of the people cried out, 'he hath spoiled his hand for ever having the use of it any more.' But I looked at it in the love of God (for I was in the love of God to them all, that had persecuted me) and after a while the Lord's power sprang through me again and through my hand and arm, so that in a moment I recovered strength in my hand and arm, in the sight of them all."

Thereupon the unconquered and fearless man was "moved of the Lord" to go back to Ulverston and walk through the market-place where many people were gathered. As he was going through the market-place a soldier, belted and armed, met him and said with admiration: "Sir, I see you are a *man*, and I am ashamed and grieved that you should be so abused. If I can do anything to assist you, let me know." Fox quietly told his

unknown soldier-friend that "the Lord's power was over all," and that he needed no sword. That night when Fox got back to Swarthmore Hall his body and arms were "yellow, black and blue, with blows and bruises," but his spirit was triumphant.

A still more fierce and brutal assault was made upon him two weeks later at Walney, a little island which skirts the western coast of Furness. He went to Walney with James Nayler and had a meeting in the town of Cockan on the island. A man came into the meeting with a cocked pistol and asked for George Fox. The people ran away in great fear, but Fox stepped up to the man without fear of the pistol. The man aimed the pistol at Fox and snapped the trigger, but the pistol "would not go off." The people tried to seize the man, to prevent him from doing mischief, but Fox was "moved in the Lord's power" to speak to him, which struck such a fear into his soul that he trembled and went and hid himself away.

But the next morning, in another part of the island, a mob of forty men "with staves, clubs and fishing poles" fell upon Fox, beating him and pushing him toward the sea, aiming apparently to drown him, which they almost did. It seems that the people all believed that Fox had "bewitched" James Lancaster, one of their townsmen who was "convinced" by Fox's preaching

and had become a Quaker. Full of rage and led on by Lancaster's wife, they rushed at the gentle Fox, knocked him down, stunned him and rained volleys of stones upon him. When he came back to consciousness, he saw James Lancaster shielding him with his own body while Lancaster's wife was trying to dash stones at his face. Lancaster succeeded in getting his wounded friend into a boat and so rescuing him from the frantic mob which stoned the boat until it was out beyond their range. Meantime they discovered James Nayler who was left behind and they fell upon him, crying, "Kill him, kill him." Nayler also had a narrow escape, but eventually managed to get off with only heavy bruises. When Fox and Lancaster landed from their boat across the channel on the mainland, another crowd came at them with "pitchforks, flails and staves," crying, "Kill him, knock him on the head, bring the cart and carry him away to the church yard." He fortunately got away from the rabble alive, though covered with bruises and besmeared all over with miry dirt, and so sore that the next day he was unable to ride on the horse which Margaret Fell, hearing of his experience, sent to fetch him back to Swarthmore Hall.

Not having killed him by mob violence and not being able by persecution to stop the impetus of his movement, his opponents now tried to get

him imprisoned on the charge that he had claimed to be divine and equal with God! A court warrant was issued against him, while Judge Fell was absent on business, but when Judge Fell returned the officials were afraid to carry it out and so did not "serve it" on Fox. He, however, rode to the city of Lancaster at the time of the court sessions to defend himself. Judge Fell, loyal to his guest, went with him, and stood by him, like the brave man he was. Fox not only cleared himself of the charges in the unserved warrant, but he was given a public opportunity in the court room to declare his message, which he did in such a way that many prominent persons in Lancaster were convinced by it. This affair at the sessions called forth a famous little book from Fox's pen—one of the first of many such—which he called, "Saul's Errand to Damascus, with His Packet of Letters from the High Priest against the Disciples of the Lord." Another attempt was made at the January session of the court in Lancaster to try Fox, on a similar charge, but Colonel West, the clerk of the assize, refused to issue the warrant and told the judge that he was ready to offer up his estate and even his body for Fox, whom he believed to be innocent. Fox, hearing that he might be summoned, went straight to Lancaster to confront his adversaries, but "the Lord's power was over all and gave dominion."

For many weeks following, during the spring

of 1653, with his headquarters at Swarthmore Hall, he labored in Westmoreland, Cumberland, Lancashire and the western part of Yorkshire, with the usual experiences of success and fierce persecution. Sitting one day in April at Swarthmore Hall, when Judge Fell and Justice Gervase Benson were discussing the news and talking of events in Parliament, of which Judge Fell was probably still a member, Fox was suddenly "moved to tell them that before that day two weeks the Parliament should be broken up and the speaker plucked out of his chair." Two weeks passed, and Justice Benson once more visited Swarthmore, this time with the news that Oliver Cromwell had expelled the "Rump," as it was called, of the Long Parliament, and had "plucked the speaker out of his chair." "George, I see," he told Judge Fell, "is a true prophet."

It was not, however, because he foresaw an occasional event that George Fox was a "prophet"; it was rather because he saw, more clearly than most did, the truth about man's soul and the real, spiritual nature of religion, and because he was able, through sacrifice and suffering, to make others *see*. "To receive and go with a message and to have a word from the Lord, as the prophets and apostles had and did, and *as I had done*," he told the priests who came to discuss with him at Swarthmore, was the real mark of *living religion*.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEETING WITH OLIVER CROMWELL

In midsummer of 1653, George Fox came to Carlisle. He had his first meeting here in the Abbey with Baptists and soldiers, many of whom were "convinced." Then he went to the Castle and preached to the garrison, telling the soldiers that Christ within them would be their teacher and their guide, if they would watch for the divine Light and obey it, when it revealed itself to them. He went also to the market place and warned all who were selling merchandise against cheating and against all forms of unfair or dishonest dealing. While he was speaking a man cried out against him and Fox "set his eyes upon him and spoke to him in the power of the Lord," whereupon the man, who could not stand the gaze, cried: "Do not pierce me so with thy eyes; keep thy eyes off me."

Finally Fox went on Sunday morning to the cathedral and, "after the priest had done," "preached the truth to the people and declared the word of life amongst them." The *Journal* says that the power of the Lord was so dreadful among them that the people trembled and shook, and many thought that the "steeple-house" shook!

A party of the people, led on by the magistrates' wives, rose up in rage against him, but the soldiers sided with him and rallied around him. In the midst of the tumult a file of soldiers, at the governor's order, came down from the garrison and arrested him, though the soldiers who had heard him remained very friendly and sympathetic. He was committed to prison on the charge of being "a blasphemer, a heretic and a seducer!"

As Fox had been in prison once before at Derby on the charge of blasphemy there was grave danger that he would now be hanged, if he were found guilty by the court a second time. He was abominably treated in the prison, put into the worst dungeon "with moss-troopers [cut-throats] thieves and murderers," in a place full of insects and not fit for cattle to live in. Beside this vile treatment, he was frequently cudgeled by the brutal jailer, who "beat Friends as if he had been beating a pack of wool." When the prisoner went to the grate to get his food, the jailer would beat him off "with a great staff." On one occasion, when the jailer was fiercely beating him with his cudgel, Fox began to "sing in the Lord's power." The jailer went away and got a fiddler and brought him into the dungeon and set him playing. Fox was "moved in the everlasting power of the Lord God to sing," and, he adds, "my voice drowned them and struck them and confounded them."

Some of his powerful, influential friends, notably Anthony Pearson and Gervase Benson, wrote vigorous letters to the Carlisle authorities in his behalf and parliamentary influence from London was exercised in his favor, so that after an imprisonment of seven weeks Fox was released without undergoing a trial.

While he was in the Carlisle prison a young lad of sixteen, named James Parnell, walked a hundred and fifty miles to have an interview with the famous Quaker. He was "convinced" and became one of the most wonderful and effective of all the young preachers of the Light. He became a gentle saint, like St. Francis, and when in Colchester, where he labored as the first Quaker apostle in that district, a brutal man struck him with a great staff and said "Take *that* for Jesus Christ's sake," the young lad answered, "Friend, I do receive it for Jesus Christ's sake." Here in a terrible hole in Colchester Castle "Little James" met his death, after valiant work for Christ, and so became the first Quaker martyr.

Meantime the Quaker cause was powerfully advancing. New districts were constantly being visited by the bands of workers, new preachers were being won for the work and the first simple stage of organization was now begun. Of all the efforts to tell England about the Quaker message none were more remarkable than those which

were made in London and Bristol. The two messengers who came to London to tell the people of that city about the Light of Christ in the lives of men were Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough, who, as we have seen, had once been "Seekers." They were young men, full of life and enthusiasm and powerful preachers. They at once produced a profound impression. Howgill wrote joyously, "By the arm of the Lord all falls before us." "Astonishment took hold" upon the people and multitudes were convinced. It was without doubt a new kind of preaching and it reached the hearts of men and women as nothing had done for generations before. No less extraordinary was the effect of the preaching of Audland and Camm in Bristol. They discovered in and around the city communities of Seekers like those in the northern counties and here, again, these *waiting* people came over in multitudes to join those who believed that they were happy *finders*. Sometimes more than 3000 people came to their meetings and they write with enthusiasm that their "net is likely to break with fishes."

George Fox, too, was having vast throngs at meetings in the north. Many thousands the *Journal* says, were at "a mighty meeting" at Synderhill Green, near Halifax, and "the Lord's power and truth was over all." Great meetings were later held in Lincolnshire and in many other

counties, as Fox traveled south. He came, in his journeyings, to his old home at Fenny Drayton which he had not visited for three years. Here he had long and vigorous discussions with "priest Stephens" and with eight other clergymen who came to his help. "The Lord's power came over all" and his "truth confounded them." George's father, good old "Righteous Christer," though he still attended the church and had not been completely "convinced," listened with keen appreciation to his son's words and struck his cane on the ground and said, "Truly, I see, he that will stand to the truth, it will carry him out [triumphantly]." Even "priest Stephens" said, "What might George not have been, if it had not been for the Quakers!"

After many experiences in his home neighborhood Fox went on with his travels, until he came to Whetstone in the same county as Drayton, i. e., Leicestershire, where he planned to hold a meeting with Friends who were coming in from the surrounding district. A band of soldiers from Colonel Hacker's regiment came to this meeting, evidently suspecting there was some plot brewing against Oliver Cromwell. The troopers stopped the meeting and took George Fox, with one of his companions, to Colonel Hacker. Hacker seems to have been convinced that Fox and his friends were plotting to overthrow the government and possibly intended to restore the Stuarts! He en-

deavored to make the Quaker traveler promise not to hold any more meetings, but quite naturally he failed to get such a promise! Whereupon he decided to send Fox to London to be dealt with by Oliver Cromwell himself. Before sending him to London, the Colonel made one more effort to induce his prisoner to give the desired promise. He had Fox brought to his bedroom in the early morning and asked him if he would promise. George replied, "I shall go to meetings whenever the Lord orders me to go." "Well, then," said Colonel Hacker, "you must go to the Protector." Fox, thereupon, kneeled by his bedside and asked the Lord to forgive him. "And when the day of thy misery and trial comes upon thee," Fox said to him, "I bid thee remember what I had said to thee now." When Colonel Hacker was about to be executed a few years later he did "remember."

Captain Drury, who was given charge of taking Fox to Cromwell, kept asking him on their journey up to London, if he was not ready now to "promise" not to hold meetings and so have his liberty. The captain got no results. As they put up at inns on the way Fox was "moved of the Lord to warn the people that the day of the Lord was coming." And so the strange procession went on until they came to London and Captain Drury lodged his prisoner in the "Mermaid Inn," and

went to make his report to the Protector. Cromwell requested that Fox sign a document promising not to take up arms against the government! The Quaker prisoner then wrote a letter to tell Oliver Cromwell that God had sent him (George Fox) to turn people from darkness to light, not to bear arms against anybody; to be a witness against evil and hate and violence, to bring men away from swords and guns and killing and to lead them to a kind of life which would make war impossible. It gradually dawned upon the mind of the captain that his prisoner was not very dangerous after all and finally he took him in an informal way to Whitehall to see the Protector.

It was in the early morning and Cromwell was in the process of being dressed by his valet when Fox was ushered in to his presence. The meeting was in the famous Whitehall palace. "Peace be to this house," was the salutation with which George Fox entered the Protector's bedroom. Here they were face to face, two of the most remarkable and two of the most typical men of the seventeenth century in England. They were very unlike and yet they had much in common. They were both the product of great spiritual forces and religious movements and both were trying, each in his own way, to free England from the tyranny of the past. Both feared God and nothing else in the world, and both were sincere

men, who meant to be true to the light which they had to live by. What a scene it was for some great painter to portray. Throughout the entire interview George Fox wore his hat, and Cromwell, before whom everybody else uncovered and bowed or kneeled, was not the least offended, but understood by a kind of fine instinct that his visitor meant him no disrespect. The two brave men talked together much about truth and much about religion, and they seem to have understood one another fairly well and to have had considerable agreement in their talk. Fox says that Oliver "carried himself very moderately." Oliver told George that he quarreled too much with the ministers. It was a good point to make and there was some real truth in it. Fox claimed that it was the ministers who began the quarrel, that they were forever attacking him, though he admitted that he often charged the ministers with preaching for money, with being covetous and greedy, and with always having their eyes on the main chance for their own advancement. Several times Oliver declared "that is so," "that is true," "that is a fact." Fox pointed out in his usual way that it was not enough to read the Scriptures and to claim to believe them; that to be a true Christian one must have the Spirit and life and power of the apostles and prophets who wrote the Scriptures, and not merely to have their books, and Oliver

apparently thought so too. He caught George by the hand, his eyes filled with tears, and he said, "Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour a day together, we should be nearer one to the other." The great man looked up kindly and added, I wish no more ill to thee than I do to my own soul." To which George replied, "If thou didst wish ill to me thou wouldst wrong thy own soul."

When it was time to go Fox, like an ancient prophet, bid the Lord Protector hearken to God's voice, keep in the fear of God, that he might stand and live and act in God's counsel and guidance. "If thou wilt do that," he said, "God will keep thee tender and free from hardness of heart. But if thou shalt not hear God's voice, thy heart will become hardened." "That is so," Cromwell confessed, and the two men parted.

The Protector at once saw, with his keen eye which looked through men, that this man was no plotter, no dangerous insurrectionist. He sent out word by Captain Drury, before Fox had left the place, that he was at full liberty and might go whither he would. We can almost hear his visitor calmly say, "How otherwise." By Cromwell's order Fox was then brought into the great hall where the gentlemen of the Protector's court gathered to dine. It soon began to dawn upon the mind of Fox that he was being taken to a

banquet in the hall of the palace instead of to a prison and immediately he declined to accept the favor. He sent a message back to the Lord Protector that he could not eat his food nor partake of his drink. When this message reached Cromwell he said: "Now I see that there is a people risen up that I cannot win with gifts, honors, offices or places; but all other sects and people I can." Fox returned to the "Mermaid" a free man and paid for his own breakfast.

This unexpected visit to London gave the Quaker apostle a fine opportunity to proclaim his message in the great metropolis, which he at once proceeded to do with power and success. He had many "great and powerful meetings" in the city and a vast number of people were "convinced" who swelled the rapidly growing new Society. He was "moved" also "to declare the day of the Lord" to the people in Whitehall palace and "there was a great convincement in the Protector's house and family," though he did not this time see the stern old warrior who had become the head of the nation.

CHAPTER VIII

IN ENGLAND'S WORST PRISON

After the interview with Cromwell and the "powerful meetings" in London, Fox started off again upon his almost incessant travels. Probably no man in the seventeenth century knew all of England as intimately as he did. He visited not only the great cities, but the small towns, villages and hamlets as well. On horseback or on foot he traveled both the great roads and the country lanes. He met and talked with all types of people and he saw all sides of life.

Leaving London he went first to "a great meeting" at Luton in Bedfordshire. He declared "God's eternal truth" and "people generally were convinced." He soon returned to London, "where Friends were finely established in the truth," and then he took a journey through the towns and villages of Kent. In his wide journeyings he went to Colchester and had a brief farewell visit with James Parnell a short time before that brave young martyr's life was ended. It was at this period—sometime in the autumn of 1655—that he rode through the crowd of Cambridge students who could not unhorse him and who

wondered at the shine on his face! Not long after this, when he was riding with some of his companions through the famous town of Warwick, the "rude people" gathered with stones and sticks to give them a rough passage through the streets. The *Journal* tells the story well: "One of them took hold of my horse's bridle and broke it; but the horse drawing back threw him under him. Though the bailiff saw this, yet he did not stop, nor so much as rebuke, the rude multitude, so that it was much we were not slain or hurt in the streets; for the people threw stones and struck at us, as we rode along the town. When we were quite out of the town, I told Friends *it was upon me from the Lord that I must go back into the town again.*" "So," the account goes on, "I passed through the market in the dreadful power of God, declaring the word of life to them, and John Crook [one of his companions] followed me. Some struck at me; but the Lord's power was over them and gave me dominion over all."

In the inn at Baldock, one of the many places visited on this tour of counties, "two desperate fellows" fell to fighting furiously, so that "none durst come nigh to part them." "But I was moved in the Lord's power," Fox says, "to go to them; and when I had loosed their hands, I held one of them by one hand and the other by the other, showed them the evil of their doings and reconciled

them one to the other and they were so loving and thankful to me that people admired it!"

After a short visit again to London, where he saw James Nayler and had a foresight that some sad trouble was coming to him—"a fear struck me concerning him"—Fox started off on a great spiritual campaign through the western counties of England. Edward Pyott, a former captain, and William Salt of London were his companions in travel. It proved to be hard and barren country for Fox's spiritual message. The people were light and flippant. They were not prepared by long spiritual training for the new teaching, as the people in the North had been. The travelers found few "sober" or "tender" people who were ready to be "convinced." At Kingsbridge, in the inn, they found many people drinking and Fox was "moved of the Lord to go in amongst them, and direct them to the light which Christ, the heavenly Man, had enlightened them with: by which they might see all their evil ways, words and deeds, and by the same light they might also see Jesus their Saviour. The innkeeper stood uneasy, seeing that the speaking hindered his guests from drinking; and as soon as the last words were out of my mouth, he snatched up the candle and said, 'Come, here is a light for you to go to your chamber.' Next morning, when he was cool I represented to him what an uncivil

thing it was for him to do so, then warning him of the day of the Lord, we got ready and passed away." At Plymouth the cause prospered better and they had a "precious meeting." "The Lord's power came over the people" here. Many were "convinced," among them Lady Elizabeth Trelawny, daughter of a baronet, and a "fine meeting was settled there in the Lord's power."

Trouble awaited the little party in Cornwall. The magistrates were resolved to have no Quakers in their district. At Marazion, which Fox calls "Market-Jew," the constables summoned Fox and Pyott to appear before the mayor and aldermen of the town. They had no warrant to make the arrest with, and when Fox asked to see the warrant, one of the constables pulled out his mace from under his cloak and said *that* was his warrant. Fox, as usual, took the opportunity of delivering his message to the mayor and other officials who seem to have been impressed and were ready to let the little party go on unmolested. But unfortunately they were met about three miles from the town by an officer belonging to the staff of Major Ceely who was stationed at St. Ives. The officer took to the major a copy of a paper which Fox had written and distributed telling about the light within. This paper aroused Major Ceely and the people of the town and while the little party was waiting to have a horse shod, and while

Fox, meantime, had gone a little way off to look at Bristol Channel, Pyott and Salt were dragged away to Major Ceely's house. Here Fox found them, surrounded by "rude people," "more like Indians than like Christians." The proceedings in their examination were very irregular and informal. One of the priests who was present asked Fox why he didn't have his hair cut and other "frivolous" things were said and done. Finally they were put under a guard of soldiers, "who were hard and wild, like the justice himself; nevertheless we warned the people of the day of the Lord and declared the truth to them. The next day he sent us, guarded by a party of horse, with swords and pistols, to Redruth."

The next day was Sunday—"First-day," Fox calls it—but the soldiers were determined, nevertheless, to travel forward with their prisoners. It was, however, not easy to make progress. Fox insisted on preaching to the soldiers, while Pyott was at the same time preaching to the townspeople in Redruth. Then Fox went to give his message to the people in the town while Pyott spoke in his turn to the soldiers. William Salt, meantime, got away and went to the "steeple-house" to give a message to the priest and his congregation. The people got in "a mighty rage" and came with a rush, "ready to kill us," Fox says, "but I declared the day of the Lord and the word of eternal

life" to them. "When we were got to the town's end," he continues, "I was moved of the Lord to go back again. . . . The soldiers drew out their pistols and swore I should not go back. I heeded them not, but rode back and they rode after me." And without the least fear of the soldiers' pistols he finished his religious mission in Redruth!

In the evening of this strenuous Sunday the party arrived at Falmouth, then called Smethick, and the chief constable of the town and many "sober people" came to the inn to have discourse with Fox "concerning the things of God," and the tired man's heart was much refreshed. But the rough and lawless soldiers, who were under the direction of a thoroughly unprincipled leader, named Keat, continually annoyed and abused Fox and his friends. Keat brought "a rude and wicked man" into Fox's room at the inn, and "this evil-minded man" went "huffing up and down the room." Fox bade him "fear the Lord." "Whereupon," the *Journal* says, "he ran upon me, struck me with both hands, and placing his leg behind me, would fain have thrown me down, but he could not for I stood stiff and still, and let him strike!"

The escort was ordered according to the magistrate's warrant, to conduct the prisoners to the governor of Pendennis Castle, Captain Fox, if he was at home, if not to convey them to Launceston

Jail. As Captain Fox was not at home at the time, the Friends had to go on, with their roystering escort, to Launceston. On their journey thither they met General Desborough, a brother-in-law of Cromwell, who, under the Protector, administered the government in the six western counties. One of Desborough's officers at once recognized Fox and called out to him, "Oh, Mr. Fox, what are you doing here?" "I am a prisoner," the latter replied. "Alack," said the officer, "for what?" Fox explained how he and his party had been arrested while engaged in religious work, and at once the military man offered to speak to Desborough about it and get him freed. The release might easily have been secured had not a discussion arisen about the light of Christ within. Desborough said he did not believe in it and spoke strongly against it. That was too much for Fox to stand and he reproved the great man, who forthwith told the soldiers to proceed to Launceston.

The little party had another miserable night in the inn at Bodmin, not far from their destination. The outrageous captain of the escort, Keat, undertook to put Fox in a room with a raving lunatic, who had "a naked rapier in his hand." "What now, Keat," Fox cried out, "what trick hast thou played now, to put me into a room where there is a man with his naked rapier?" "Oh," said he, "pray hold your tongue, for if you speak to this

man we cannot all rule him, he is so devilish." He finally got another room, away from the madman, but the "hard and darkened" soldiers drank and roared all night so that there was no sleep for the weary prisoners.

The next morning they were brought to the terrible Cornwall Jail at Launceston where they were to spend the following eight months—from midwinter to early autumn. During the first nine weeks they were decently treated while they were waiting for their trial to come off. At about the spring equinox Chief Justice Glyn came to Launceston for the trial of the prisoners. The rumor had spread that Fox was likely to be hung and a multitude of people poured into the little town to see the famous Quaker go by. As the pikemen took Fox through the streets to the court room they had "much ado" to get through the crowd which packed the town. As the three Quakers with their hats on their heads filed into the room before the bewigged Chief Justice, Fox "was moved to say, 'Peace be amongst you!'" Judge Glyn with a quizzical look turned to the jailer and said, "What be these you have brought here into court?" "Prisoners, my Lord," said the jailer. "Why do you not put off your hats?" the Judge asked the prisoners. No answer. "Put off your hats." Still neither answer nor action. "The court commands you to put off your hats," sternly

said the judge. Then Fox quietly said, "Where did ever any magistrate, king or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats, when they came before them in their courts? And if the law of England doth command any such thing, show me that law either written or printed." "Take him away," shouted the Chief Justice, "I'll firk him," i. e., "trounce him."

The prisoners were taken out and put in with the thieves who were awaiting trial. Soon the judge had them brought back into the court room. "Come," said the judge, "when had they hats from Moses to Daniel? Come, answer me. I have you fast now." Fox replied, "Thou mayest read in the third of Daniel that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hose and their *hats* on!" "Take them away!" shouted the judge. All day the strange proceedings went on in court. Absurd charges, which apparently nobody believed, were made against Fox by Major Ceely. Again and again the hat-issue arose. Once the jailer took off the hats and handed them to the prisoners who at once put them on again. Finally the three men were fined £13, 6s. 8d. for "contempt of court," and ordered to be imprisoned until the fine should be paid—which anybody might know would be *never*.

Up till the time of the trial the three Quakers

had been paying the jailer seven shillings a week apiece for their board and seven shillings for the keep of their horses. After the trial was over they refused to continue this payment. Whereupon the jailer, who was himself a criminal and bore the mark of a branding iron, became fierce with anger and thrust them into the appalling dungeon called "Doomsdale." Fox's account of this dungeon is too awful to copy for my readers. One wonders how any person could have lived in it at all. In fact few ever did come out of it alive. It was generally believed in the prison that this dungeon was haunted by the ghosts of those who had died in it, and the jailer and his wild friends tried to scare Fox with this story of the ghosts. But he did not take fright much more easily than Luther did at the devils in Worms. "I told them," Fox says, "that if all the spirits and devils in hell were there, I was over them in the power of God and feared no such thing!" We may smile at Fox's refusal to take off his hat in court, which seems to a modern person a harmless courtesy, but nobody can well miss the brave and heroic spirit in this man, who looked upon "hat-honor" as downright disobedience to God.

About midsummer an order of the court was issued declaring that the door of Doomsdale should be opened and that the prisoners should have permission to clean up the abominable dungeon

and to buy their food in the town. A saintly woman, named Ann Downer, came down to Launceston from London to cook their food and to give them what human service was allowed in the existing prison system. Another manifestation of love was given which deeply touched Fox's heart. Humphrey Norton went to Cromwell and offered to go to Doomsdale and suffer there in place of Fox if the Protector would give him permission to do it. Of course this could not be granted, but the request made a deep impression on Oliver Cromwell. He turned to his courtiers and said, "Which of you would do so much for me, if I were in the same condition?" Hugh Peters, the famous preacher, chaplain to the Protector, told Cromwell that there was no better way to spread the teachings of the Quakers than to keep George Fox shut up in Launceston Castle. The net result was that an order came from Whitehall to Major General Desborough that some way must be found to free the Quakers who were in Launceston Jail.

CHAPTER IX

ANOTHER KIND OF CATASTROPHE

It took some time to get George Fox out of Launceston Jail even after General Desborough received the request from London to have him set at liberty. In the first place Desborough undertook to secure a promise from Fox that he would go home and not preach any more. He would of course have spent the rest of his days in Doomsdale before he would make that promise. Next, there was the problem of the unpaid fees to the jailer. A Puritan named Colonel Bennett held a lease of the jail and he received a certain proportion of the fees which the jailer squeezed out of the wretched prisoners who were put into Launceston Castle. Fox and his friends contended that they were "innocent sufferers" and could pay no fees for the privilege of staying in Doomsdale! On this point, again, Fox was ready to stand out forever, but the authorities finally yielded and let the prisoners go, without any conditions, on the 13th of September, 1656. One very amusing episode which occurred during this imprisonment will serve to show the power which Fox, even when in a filthy prison where the jailer called him "a

hatchet-faced dog," exercised on men. A certain Colonel Rouse, with a large company of attendants and companions, came to Launceston to see Fox. "He was as full of words and talk," Fox says, "as ever I heard in my life, so that there was no speaking to him. At length I asked him whether he had ever been at school." "At school!" said he, "yes." "At school!" said the soldiers, "doth he say so to our colonel who is a scholar?" "Then," said Fox, "if he be a scholar he ought to know what belongs to questions and answers, he should be still and receive answers to what he hath said." "Then," the account continues, "I was moved to speak the word of life to him in God's dreadful power; which came so over him that he could not open his mouth: his face swelled and was red like a turkey; his lips moved and he mumbled something; but the people thought he would have fallen down. I stepped to him and he said he was never so in his life before: for the Lord's power stopped the evil power in him; so that he was almost choked. The man was ever after very loving to Friends, and not so full of airy words to us. The Lord's power came over him, and the rest that were with him."

It was at this time, while Fox was in Launceston, that the "Fifth-Monarchy-men," as they were called, were going about in England trying to convince the people that Christ was going to come that

year and set up His thousand-year reign on the earth. There had been, they declared, four great world-kingdoms and now Christ's reign would end them all and begin the Fifth and last kingdom. Fox told them they were looking in the wrong place for Christ and His kingdom. They thought it was to be an outward kingdom, like Cæsar's, and that Christ would come as a monarch, like Charlemagne, but Fox told them that Christ had come already and was now here. He comes as a divine and heavenly presence to the souls of men and wishes to rule their lives and to reign in their hearts. His kingdom comes as fast as people learn to live His way and to do His will and to let His spirit conquer the evil in them and raise up the good. Nobody will ever find Him if they look for Him in the sky or if they expect to see Him sitting on a throne in some capital city, like London.

As soon as the doors of Launceston Castle were opened to them the three prisoners who had suffered so unmercifully for nine dreary months rode away on their horses, free men and full of joy. A worse disaster, however, than Doomsdale was awaiting Fox. That was the "fall" of his old friend and fellow-laborer, James Nayler. As the three men continued their journey they came to Exeter, and here they found James Nayler and many other Friends in prison. Fox went to the

prison to visit his friends and he at once saw that James was out of the way and going wrong; as Fox puts it, "he had run out into imaginations." He had formed wild ideas, was misguided, and was dreaming that he himself was to be treated as a most exalted person. Fox was as gentle as a mother to those who worked and suffered with him, but he could also be like a flame of fire toward those who were undermining the great work which he believed God had sent him to do in the world. He plainly told his old friend that he was off the track and was turning against the power of God. He showed him how dangerous was the path of pride and how awful it was to turn light into darkness, but the frank, well-meant words of warning fell on deaf ears. Nayler tried to make a show of love and would have kissed Fox, but the latter would receive no sham kisses from one whose spirit was plainly wrong. "James," he said, "it will be harder for thee to get down thy rude company [of followers] than it was for thee to set them up."

Poor Nayler was not altogether to blame for the wild, wrong course he took. He had, as Fox said, "run out into imaginations." He had become temporarily insane. The strain of his work, the terrible persecutions he had undergone, the dreadful prison experiences, and the unrestrained imaginations and expectations prevailing around

him, had all gone to his head and set it into sad disorder. Soon after Fox left him at Exeter, he was freed from prison and went to Bristol. Here he allowed his misguided followers to get up a "triumphal procession," while he imitated Christ riding into Jerusalem. The little party of eight, surrounding Nayler who rode on horseback, sang, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Israel." Through the rain and mud, the women spreading their garments in the way, the strange, mad group trudged on into Bristol, where they were all arrested and thrust into prison. They all were subjects for an insane asylum and they all needed the care of a skillful physician of the mind, but they got instead the only kind of treatment that England knew how to give such people in the seventeenth century. They called them "blasphemers" and they dealt with them as criminals to be frightfully punished. After months of investigation and trial James Nayler received his awful sentence. He was to be set in the pillory in the Palace yard at Westminster for two hours, and then be whipped by the hangman through the streets for two hours more. Three days later he was to stand again in the pillory from eleven to one, when his tongue was to be bored through with a hot iron and the letter B (for blasphemer) was to be branded with a burning iron on his forehead. Then he was to be taken to Bristol and made to ride through the

city on horseback, with his face backward, and be whipped in the market place. Finally, he was to be imprisoned in Bridewell, London, until Parliament should vote to release him, his imprisonment to be in solitary confinement, at hard labor, without the use of pen, ink or paper. As Nayler listened to the appalling sentence, while the Speaker of the House of Commons read it to him, he said, "God has given me a body: God will, I hope, give me a spirit to endure it. The Lord lay not these things to your charge."

Without complaining the poor victim took his punishment. "He shrinked a little when the iron came upon his forehead," but though the body might wince the old-time spirit of the man returned and rose to meet the awful crisis. He was kept in solitary confinement for three years and then Parliament—the "Rump"—voted his release. As soon as he could do so, after his release from confinement, Nayler went to find George Fox and to ask his forgiveness for the disgrace and trouble which his deeds and acts had brought upon the Society of Friends. Fox himself was very ill and broken at this time and could not see him, and in "a quiet spirit" and noble frame of mind, the heavily disciplined man waited his time for reconciliation. The reconciliation came in London a little later, when "a healing spirit did abound that day." James Nayler made a

public confession of his errors and mistakes. There were few dry eyes as the Friends gathered there in the London meeting listened to the man who had suffered so much for his blunders. George Fox was there and he seemed "clothed with precious wisdom," as he "healed up the breach" between himself and his friend.

Only a few months of life remained after this for James Nayler. He started in the autumn days of the Restoration year, 1660, to walk from London to his home at Wakefield in Yorkshire. He was weak and ill—too weak and ill to journey alone on foot, but he persevered by the force of his unconquered spirit. He sat long periods at a time by the roadside, lost in meditation, thinking of the true home and the real country he was soon to see when all his pains and trials would be over. Robbers attacked him near Huntingdon and left the poor broken man bound. He was found by kind friends who cared for him tenderly until his spirit slipped away "to where beyond these voices there is peace."

About two hours before he died James Nayler spoke his farewell message, which is one of the most beautiful testimonies that any erring, repentant, much-forgiven man has left behind him. It is as follows:

"There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights

to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; and takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It's conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings: for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life."

This tragic experience had a great effect upon the later life of George Fox. It made him very much more careful to explain what he meant by the light and life of Christ in the soul. He saw now how easy it was for unbalanced people to push his idea too far and to make impossible claims about themselves. It was a hard and bitter lesson, but he thoroughly learned it, and from this point onward he was restrained and cautious in his expressions.

We must now go back to the period following the release from Launceston. Fox went steadily on with his travels, holding meetings, many of which were attended by great crowds of people, sometimes by thousands. Coming to London in October, 1656, he had another remarkable talk with Oliver Cromwell. Near Hyde Park he saw a great concourse of people, and looking more carefully he espied the Protector in the midst of the throng. He rode straight up to the side of the Protector's coach. Some of the lifeguards started to put Fox away, but Cromwell at once recognized him and forbade the guards to disturb him. "So," Fox says, "I rode by him [i. e., by his side] declaring unto him what the Lord gave me to say unto him of his condition and of the sufferings of Friends in the nation, and how contrary to Christ this persecution was and to the apostles and Christianity, and so I rode by his coach till we came to James' Park gate, and he desired me to come to his house."

The next day Cromwell told one of his wife's maids, Mary Saunders, a Quakeress, that he had some good news for her. "George Fox has come to town," he said, "and he rode from Hyde Park to James' Park by my side." A little later, Fox availed himself of Cromwell's invitation to his house, and he went with Edward Pyott, his prison-companion, to Whitehall. Once more Fox urged

upon the Protector the release of Friends who were in prison and the cessation of religious persecution. Then he directed Cromwell to the light of Christ in his own heart, but the Protector had just been having an interview with the famous Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, Dr. Owen, a man very much opposed to the Quaker teaching, and he spoke against the light and belittled it. This attitude aroused Fox, as it always did, and he discussed the subject with much fervor and earnestness. "The power of the Lord," Fox says, "rose up in me and I was moved to bid him lay down his crown at the feet of Jesus." Fox was standing by a table and Cromwell came over and sat on the edge of the table by him and they went on discussing the light of Christ but without getting any closer together in their religious views. There can, however, be no doubt from the accounts that Cromwell had a deep respect for Fox and it would appear that he thought of him quite in the light of a religious prophet. We shall hear more at a later critical moment about laying the "crown" at the feet of Jesus!

After an extensive journey through the counties as far north as Yorkshire, with much success in gaining convincements and with some hairbreadth escapes, Fox went forth to break new ground in Wales and Scotland. He had a powerful helper for the Welsh campaign in John ap John, a fervent

and faithful Welshman, who had been "convinced" at Swarthmore in 1653. Great numbers of people in Wales were brought into the Society through this visit of 1657, and later on they migrated almost in a body to Pennsylvania, when William Penn began his "holy experiment" in that great colony. A really wonderful meeting was held by the band of Quaker travelers in Radnorshire where the people lay in mighty throngs, "like a leaguer." "I had a great travail on me," Fox says, "for the salvation of the people. And so I passed to the meeting and stood atop of a chair about three hours, sometimes leaned my hand on a man's head, and stood a pretty while before I began to speak. Many people sat on horseback: and at last I felt the power of the Lord went over all, and the Lord's everlasting life and truth shined over all, and the Scriptures were opened to them." The people seem to have been deeply impressed and "they turned to the Lord," as Fox puts it.

The journey in Scotland was not so rich in results as was the one through Wales. The Scotch people had accepted the religious system of John Calvin as interpreted to them by John Knox and this system was very unlike the Quaker conception of religion. Fox found few persons there eager for his teaching or responsive to it. They had not been "prepared" for such ideas and they did not give him the welcome which he found in many

places. And yet he says, "When I first set my horse's feet upon Scottish ground, I felt the seed of God to sparkle about me, like innumerable sparks of fire." He adds, however, "There is abundance of thick, cloddy earth of hypocrisy and falseness above, and a briery, brambly nature, which is to be burnt up with God's Word, and ploughed up with His spiritual plough, before God's Seed brings forth heavenly and spiritual fruit to His glory. But the husbandman is to wait in patience."

Some of the very choicest spirits in the Society of Friends came from Scotland and there was undoubtedly "a seed of God" there, but the Presbyterian ministers were determined to make life as uncomfortable as possible for Fox while he was trying to find his scattered "seed." He was ordered to appear before the Council in Edinburgh. As he entered the room his hat was removed by the doorkeeper and hung up until he came out. He stood for a little while before the Council and as no one said anything to him, he was "moved of the Lord" to say "Peace be amongst you; wait in the fear of the Lord, that ye may receive His wisdom from above by which all things were made and created; that by it ye may all be ordered, and may order all things under your hand to God's glory." The Council asked what business he had in Scotland. "I came to visit the seed of God,"

he told them. "You must depart the nation of Scotland by this day sen-night," i. e., in a week, the Council ordered. He paid no attention to the order, but went on with his work of visiting "the seed." He came back to Edinburgh, passed the sentries, rode up the street to the market place and out at the gate. "We rode as it were," he says, "against the cannon's mouth, or the sword's point, but the Lord's power and immediate hand carried us over the heads of all!"

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE COMMONWEALTH ERA

GREAT changes in the government and in the life of England were now coming on. Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, died on the 3rd of September, 1658, and a period of uncertainty and perplexity followed the great man's departure. George Fox appears to have followed political and public events with a keen and watchful eye and to have entered deeply into the struggle through which the nation was passing. In the spring of 1657 there was a rumor afloat that Cromwell was to be crowned king. On the 25th of March of that year Parliament decided to offer the crown to him and to request him to take the office and the title. As soon as Fox heard of it he went at once to warn Cromwell against accepting the kingship. "I met him," the *Journal* says, "in the Park, and told him that they that would put a crown on him would take away his life, and he asked me, What did I say? And I said again, They that sought to put a crown on him would take away his life and I bid him mind the crown that was immortal, and he thanked me and bid me go to his house. And then I was moved to write to him and told

him how he would ruin his family and posterity and bring darkness upon the nation if he did so." On the 3rd of April and finally emphatically on the 8th of April, Cromwell refused to be made king.

Fox at this time wrote many papers to the Protector on a variety of subjects. One of the most interesting of his letters was the one he wrote to Cromwell's beloved daughter, Lady Elizabeth Claypole, when she lay ill with an incurable disease. "Friend," the letter begins to the great Lady who had herself been a "seeker," "be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord, from whom cometh life, whereby thou mayest receive His strength and power to allay all blusterings, storms and tempests," and the letter ends with these noble words: "And so thou shalt come to know the Seed of God, which is the heir of the promise of God, and of the world which hath no end. . . . Ye shall receive the power of an endless life, the power of God which is immortal; which brings the immortal soul up to the immortal God, in whom it doth rejoice. So in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty strengthen thee. G. F." We are told that the letter "staid the mind" of Lady Elizabeth and was afterwards used to "settle the minds" of others who were passing through suffering.

One more meeting occurred between Fox and the Protector. It was about the middle of August, two weeks before Cromwell's death. Fox says, "I met him riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came at him, he was riding at the head of his life-guards, and I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, so that he looked like a dead man." Fox spoke to him about the sufferings of Friends, great numbers of whom were at this time lying in the prisons of England. Cromwell, as usual, was cordial and friendly to him and invited him to the Palace. He went the next day, but found the Protector too ill to see him. "So," Fox writes, "I passed away and saw him no more." Once more unexpectedly he did see him, or at least his body, for when Charles II. was safely established on the throne, Cromwell's body, with the mighty spirit gone out of it, was dug up from its grave and hung on the gallows at Tyburn, and Fox says: "I saw him hanging there."

In the period of disturbance, distress and almost anarchy which followed the passing of the great man, no one knew what the future had for England. The nation was "rocking," the various parties, as Fox says, were "plucking each other to pieces," the old order was changing, yielding place to new, and the stoutest hearts were full of foreboding. For George Fox it was a time of unusual travail of spirit. He passed through a

period of serious illness and mental trouble, such as he had not known since the days of his early quest for light. He lay for some weeks only partly conscious at a Friend's house in Reading. His body underwent a profound change, his countenance was altered, and many thought he would not come back to life and health again. As he lay in his strange borderland state, he seemed to have a sight of what was coming to pass and he felt that he could read what was passing in the minds of those around him. He had, too, a sight and sense of the restoration of King Charles. Gradually he came back once more to health and normal condition again. "The Lord preserved me," he says, "by His power and spirit through and over all, and in His power I came to London again." In a short time he was ready for hard journeys, heavy work, great meetings and the stiff persecution which was an almost continuous part of his life.

On the 8th of May, 1660, Charles Stuart was proclaimed king and on the 29th of the same month he entered London. Already on the 4th of the preceding April Charles had issued his famous declaration on the subject of liberty of conscience, called the Declaration of Breda, from the Dutch city where it was set forth. It said: "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in

question for differences of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." George Fox and his friends thought when they read these fine words that their troubles were over and that now they could hold their precious truth in peace. They were, however, to be sadly disappointed.

Already before Cromwell's death George Fox had begun holding great general meetings once or twice a year for the purpose of spreading his teaching and for organizing the movement which he had started. Immense crowds of people came to these general meetings. One was held at Balby in Yorkshire in the autumn of 1656. Another of the same sort was held at Skipton, also in Yorkshire, in 1657, and these Skipton general meetings were held every year for some time. A great general meeting, "for the whole nation," was held at Luton in Bedfordshire, "at John Crook's house," in May of 1658. It lasted three days and was "attended by three or four thousand people." The inns were overcrowded and the visitors overflowed into the nearby towns. "A glorious meeting it was," Fox says, "and the everlasting gospel was preached, and many received it, . . . which gospel brought life and immortality to light in them and shined over all."

Fox set forth his religious truth to the great concourse of people in two sermons. In the first

one he spoke specially to those who had not yet accepted his teaching and in this he expounded his ideas about God and Christ and the light in the soul of man. In the second sermon, he gave much wise advice to his followers and especially to those who were accustomed to preach. He urged them to "dwell in the living, immoveable Word of God" and to talk about "the things they lived in," i. e., the things they knew from their own experience. He told them not to say too much—"take heed of many words," and he kept saying that everything must be fresh and living —it must "come out of the life and reach the life in others." He said that the minister who expects to reach people must always "feel that he stands in the presence of the Lord God." He warned them against "customary preaching," i. e., preaching just because it is the custom to have a sermon, and he told them that they ought always to aim in their preaching to bring people to such an experience of God in their own souls that they could get along without preaching. "Keep out of all jangling," he said to them, which means, "do not contend and disagree, but work and think and speak in love and patience and spiritual power."

A party of horsemen came to Luton to arrest Fox at the close of this great meeting, but for some unexplained reason they did not molest him. He

was walking in the garden when the soldiers arrived and they told John Crook, pointing to Fox, that *he* was the man they were after. "But," Fox says, "the Lord's power so confounded them that they never came into the garden, but they went their way in a rage."

One of the most important events in the period before the Restoration was the planting of Quakerism in the American colonies and in the West Indian islands. At the Skipton general meeting of 1658 a document was issued which finely says: "We have heard of great things done by the mighty power of God in many nations beyond the seas, whither He hath called forth many of our dear brethren and sisters to preach the everlasting gospel."

It seems strange to us now that the island of Barbadoes was the spiritual center in the western world from which Quakerism spread to the colonies of the Atlantic coast. One of the pioneer Quaker travelers calls this island "the nursery of the truth," and we shall see later that George Fox went to Barbadoes before he came to our shores. The first "arrivals" were women. Mary Fisher and Ann Austin reached Barbadoes toward the end of 1655 and after a successful campaign in the island they struck out for Boston in the summer of 1656. About the same time Elizabeth Harris went to the shores of Chesapeake Bay. Mary

Fisher and Ann Austin were very quickly expelled from Puritan Massachusetts and so, too, was a party of eight Quaker missionaries who arrived in Boston harbor from London two days after the two women had been banished. Severe laws were passed and everybody in Massachusetts now hoped that they had built the fences so high and tight around the colony that no more Quakers would get over them or through them. But it did not prove to be so!

In the summer of 1657 a party of eleven sailed from England for America in the little ship, *Woodhouse*, owned and captained by a remarkable Quaker from Holderness, named Robert Fowler, who dedicated his ship and his life to the service of the Lord. In his strange ship-log, or narrative of the journey, Fowler says, "We saw the Lord leading our vessel, even as it were a man leading a horse by the head." Through strange experiences the little ship was guided on until it reached New Amsterdam, now New York City. Some of the Quaker missionaries went to Long Island where they made many converts to their truth, and the rest went on in the *Woodhouse*, through the dangerous Hell-gate passage, to Rhode Island. From here the Quaker travelers scattered out to places where they had heard of groups prepared to receive their message. They were especially successful in Sandwich and in Salem in Massachu-

setts, while large groups of Quakers were formed in Newport, Providence and other towns of Rhode Island, which the Puritans called "the island of error." Meantime the Puritan authorities arose in their might to stop this hated Quaker "invasion." Laws were passed to stamp out the new religion and to punish with whipping, imprisonment or death every Quaker missionary who appeared. But it was not easy to frighten away Quakers who believed the Lord sent them to Massachusetts. So they kept on coming and went up to Boston to "look the bloody laws in the face." Four Quakers were hung on Boston Common, three of them visitors from England—William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson, and William Leddra—and one a native woman, who at the time had her home in Rhode Island, Mary Dyer. It was, however, impossible to stop the "invasion." Soon, in almost every colony along the coast, Quaker meetings grew up and the followers of George Fox abounded. In a later chapter we shall follow the travels of Fox as he went up and down the Atlantic coast line, visiting the meetings and establishing the work begun by these valiant pioneers.

CHAPTER XI

THE PERIOD OF FIERCE PERSECUTION

Oliver Cromwell in his heart truly loved liberty and hated persecution. He understood the spirit of George Fox and apparently appreciated it. The Quakers were compelled to suffer many hardships while he was Lord Protector of England but never because Cromwell personally approved of that method of dealing with religious opinions. He had to let many things happen which he would have had different if he could have followed out his own ideals. George Fox, however, did not altogether understand the complicated social and political conditions which prevailed around him, and he too severely blamed the Protector for his course. He welcomed the restoration of the Stuarts and expected, in the light of the great Declaration of Breda, that days of peaceful expansion were now before his beloved Society. Just the opposite of what he hoped and expected really came to pass, but here, again, the persecution did not come from the evil will or spirit of the King. He disapproved of it and disliked it, but he felt that, under the existing conditions, he had to allow persecution to take its ruthless course.

Charles II. entered London, as we have seen, in May, 1660, and about the same time Fox was a welcome guest at Swarthmore Hall, from which as a center he was working among the groups of Friends in the Westmoreland district. Judge Fell had died in 1658 and Margaret Fell was now the full mistress of the manor. Her whole heart was in the work of publishing what Fox and his friends called "the truth." She was a strong personality, an able woman, a real leader and she had become one of the greatest forces in the new Quaker movement. Before Fox had been many days in her house four officers came with a warrant to arrest him and take him away to Lancaster. They took him first to Ulverston where they watched him during the night for fear he might slip away up the chimney and elude them! They bragged much of their success in capturing the famous leader, one of the officers saying: "I did not think that a thousand men could have taken this man prisoner." Next morning, when some Friends of the neighborhood, with Margaret Fell and her daughters, came to see him start off on his journey to Lancaster, the officers took alarm and cried out: "Will they rescue him! will they rescue him!" Fox at once quieted their fears and showed them the spirit he was made of. The officers put him on a "little horse"—hardly more than a pony—which was led by a halter. They

beat the horse and made him kick and run. Whereupon Fox slipped off the pony's back and protested against the abuse of the dumb creature. The odd procession finally covered the fourteen miles to Lancaster and as the officers marched into the city with their prisoner he, sitting on his little horse, was "moved to sing praises unto the Lord in His triumphing power over all." Multitudes of people in Lancaster crowded the streets to see the prisoner go by and they cried out: "Look at his eyes! Look at his eyes!"

He was examined before Justice Porter, who sternly asked him "why he came down into the country at this troublesome time?"—which shows that they feared that Fox was trying to foment a rebellion! He replied, "I come to visit my brethren." "But you have great meetings up and down the country," the justice said. "Yes we have great meetings," answered Fox, "but they are peaceable and we are a peaceable people." The justice refused to let Fox see a copy of the warrant and charged him with being "a disturber of the nation," "an enemy of the king," a dangerous man who was "endeavoring to raise a new war and imbrue the nation in blood again." He was committed to the "Dark House," a miserable dungeon in Lancaster Castle, where he was kept a close prisoner, badly treated, threatened with hanging and given no chance to defend himself legally.

Margaret Fell, meantime, went up to London with a strong protest against the injustice committed against her friend. The King ordered that Fox be brought up to London for trial, before the Court of the King's Bench. Justice Porter went to London to make a stand against his prisoner, but, as he had a very bad record with which to face the Stuart king and his cavaliers, he soon slunk away and hurried back home. While the trial was proceeding, "a Gentleman of the Bedchamber named Marsh," [Richard Marche] came to the three judges who were conducting the trial and told them that it was the King's pleasure that "Fox should be set at liberty, seeing that no accuser came up against him." He was released on October 25th, having been arrested on June 3rd.

An unfortunate outbreak of the "Fifth Monarchy Men" occurred in London, January 6th, 1661, which threw the whole city into commotion and fear. Fox was at this time in serious danger since the police and soldiers suspected almost everybody and acted without judgment or restraint. Once more "the Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Esquire Marsh" came to his rescue and protected him until the sudden storm was over. Throughout the whole country the excitement spread and the Quakers were in many places confused with the unbalanced Fifth Monarchy people who were being everywhere hunted out.

The king, however, at this period exercised his royal power in favor of Friends in many instances. It was at this time that, through the intercession of Edward Burrough, he sent his mandate to the magistrates in Massachusetts and ordered them to release all Quakers imprisoned in that colony. The king sent his commands by the hand of Samuel Shattuck, who, as a Quaker, had been banished on pain of death from the colony! It was too late to save Mary Dyer, William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson and William Leddra. The first three had been executed while Fox was in prison in Lancaster and he tells us that he had "a perfect sense of their sufferings at the time," as though, he says, "the halter had been about my own neck." But these favors toward the Quakers were only temporary. New troubles of a very serious sort now began to arise and every person who accepted the position of Fox was tested as by fire.

The Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662 by which all clergymen were compelled to declare their assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer of the English Church. Under this Act about two thousand Puritan ministers, who refused to give their "assent and consent" were ejected from their churches. This terrible Act did not directly affect Fox and his followers, but it showed very plainly what treatment was likely to be meted out to those who did

not *conform* in every particular to the established church.

Another Act followed this one in 1664, called the Conventicle Act. By this Act it became a crime for more than five persons to hold a meeting together in any place, if the meeting were not in conformity with the Church of England. The penalty for the first offense was £5 (twenty-five dollars) or three months' imprisonment; for the second offense £10 (fifty dollars) or six months' imprisonment; for the third offense the penalty was banishment to some foreign plantation, or the payment of £100 (five hundred dollars) for redemption. This Conventicle Act struck straight at the life of the Quaker meeting. If more than five Friends met to worship God they were all likely to be arrested and fined, and as Friends always refused to pay such fines, they were sure to be thrust into the dreadful prisons of the period.

There was still another law which gave the Quakers almost as much trouble as did the Conventicle Act. This was a law, passed in May, 1662, providing that all persons who refused to take an oath should have a similar series of fines or imprisonment to those which were imposed upon persons who violated the Conventicle Act. Friends had a profound conscientious objection to taking any form of oath. They believed that Christ forbade swearing and they insisted that

a Christian ought always to speak the truth without taking an oath. But every time a Friend was brought into court on any charge, it was always easy to catch him by asking him to take an oath. He would never do it and then, under this law of 1662, his punishment followed. This Law of May, 1662, also made it an offense for five or more Quakers to assemble together in a religious meeting not authorized by law.

Friends everywhere defied the Conventicle Act. They went on with their meetings as though nothing had happened. The officers found it very difficult to deal with these strange people who showed no fear of prisons and who put their consciences above everything else on earth. The officers would break in on a quiet meeting, but they could not decide who should be arrested. There was no clergyman who represented the congregation. Everybody was on the same democratic level. If they carried away all the men then the women went right on with the meeting. In at least one case, in the meeting at Reading, when the officers carried away both the men and the women, the children gathered and held the meeting without any grown-up people to direct them. It was pretty hard to conquer or stamp out a movement possessed and guided by a spirit like that.

It was, however, a terrible ordeal. "Our

meetings are daily broken up," Fox writes, "by men with clubs and arms, though we meet peaceably according to the practice of God's people in primitive times, and our friends are thrown into waters and trod upon, till the very blood gushes out of them, the number of which abuses can hardly be uttered." During the first two years of the Restoration period more than three thousand Friends were thrown into prison and when the severer laws came into operation the number mounted very much higher and many of those who went away to prison never came home again to their families, for prisons then were deadly places and often like "pest houses."

It was at this time that George Fox underwent his longest imprisonment. When he was most needed to help his Friends bear the stress and strain of the great persecution he was separated from them and was in a dungeon from which, a part of the time at least, it looked as though he might never come out. In the autumn of 1663 Fox was in the northern counties and after "a precious meeting" at Cartmel, he came across the Sands to Swarthmore Hall, where he heard that Colonel Kirkby, whom Fox calls Kirby, of Kirkby Hall, a Member of Parliament and a strong supporter of the Stuarts, was hunting for him and was determined to have him arrested. He was "moved of the Lord" to go straight to Kirkby

Hall and to ask the Colonel what he wanted of him! The next morning after the "moving" came to him Fox started off for Kirkby Hall which was five miles away. He found the Flemings who were kinsmen of the Kirkbys and many other gentry of the neighborhood assembled in the Hall, to take leave of Colonel Kirkby who was starting for London to attend Parliament. Fox addressed him in his usual straightforward manner: "I came to visit thee, to know what thou hast to say to me and to see whether thou hast anything against me." The Colonel was evidently somewhat embarrassed and said in the presence of all his guests: "As I am a gentleman I have nothing against you. But Mistress Fell must not keep [i. e., hold] great meetings in her house, for they are contrary to the Act." Fox replied: "That Act does not apply to us but it is meant for those who meet to plot and contrive and raise insurrection against the king, whereas we are no such people. Thou knowest that those who meet at Margaret Fell's house are thy neighbors and are a peaceable people." The Colonel, after more friendly conversation, gave Fox his hand and said: "I have nothing against you." He went on to his duties in London and his visitor returned to Swarthmore Hall.

A short time after this the justices and deputy lieutenants of the district had a private meeting

in Holker Hall where Justice Preston lived. They decided at this meeting to arrest Fox. He heard overnight of their decision and of their plans, and he might easily have escaped, but that was not his way. He says: "I considered that, as there was the noise of a plot in the north, if I should go away they might fall upon Friends; but if I gave up myself to be taken, it might stop them and Friends should escape the better. So I gave up to be taken, and prepared myself for their coming."

Next day an officer came with sword and pistols, to take him. He was much surprised to find that Fox knew all about the proposed arrest and might have been "forty miles away," if he had cared to escape. He quietly said, "I am ready to go," and, accompanied by Margaret Fell, he went with the officer to Holker Hall to meet his accusers.

CHAPTER XII

THREE YEARS IN CASTLES

The great scene in Holker Hall has been painted by a modern artist. Three justices "examined" the Quaker prisoner, endeavoring in vain to unearth some ground on which to condemn him. He was more than their match, however, and asked them questions which they could not answer. No sign of any connection with a plot could be fixed upon him and his entire testimony was as clear as a bell: "We stand," he said, "for all good government."

When no ground of condemnation could be discovered, the justices, who were determined to make a show of their loyalty to the new king and were resolved to commit Fox to prison on some charge, decided to catch him with the demand for an oath. "Bring the Book [the Bible]", one of them cried, "and put the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to him." This justice himself was a Roman Catholic and, as the prisoner slyly suggested, had never taken the oath of allegiance to the Protestant king who in the oath had to be recognized as supreme head of the Church. "What church dost thou belong to?" Fox asked him.

"Where wast thou in Oliver's days and what didst thou do then for King Charles?"

The oath was tendered to Fox and he simply declared that he could take no oath. The justices dismissed him, only making him promise to come to the next court sessions in Lancaster. Meantime he was allowed to return to Swarthmore Hall. When the court sessions came in January, 1664, Fox appeared, according to his promise, at Lancaster, and stood before the court with his hat on his head and said, "Peace be among you." There was much discussion about his hat, but finally he was allowed to wear it unmolested. Once more the justices examined him about a possible plot, but found no evidence. Then, having no other way to condemn him, they tendered the oath again. Fox answered: "I cannot take any oath at all because Christ and the apostles have forbidden it. I have never taken an oath in my life." Whereupon he was committed to prison "for refusing to swear." He was kept in confinement in Lancaster Castle until the court assizes, three months later.

At the assizes in March, 1664, he was asked again if he would take the oath of allegiance and once more he stated his reasons with directness and force, but refused. The discussions with the justices were very amusing and showed Fox's skill in handling his case, but whenever he got

them in a close place they would retort, "Will you take the oath?" At length he was re-committed to his prison until the next assizes. At the same time Margaret Fell, for the same reason, was imprisoned in Lancaster jail. At the August assizes, Fox once more was brought into court. The oath was again tendered, and again refused. The jury, because of Fox's refusal to take the oath, found him guilty, and while waiting for his sentence, he requested that the judge should send some one to see the vile prison in which he was being kept. Some of the justices, with Colonel Kirkby, went to look at the prison-dungeon. "When they came," Fox says, "they hardly durst go in, the floor was so bad and dangerous and the place was so open to wind and rain. Some that came up said, 'Sure it was a jakes-house.'"

The next day Fox skillfully showed that the writ of indictment under which he was being sentenced was full of errors. The court admitted it, and Fox would have escaped sentence had not the judge decided to hold him again by the demand for an oath. Fox says: "I looked him in the face and the witness of God started up in him and made him blush when he looked at me, for he saw that I saw him." He was commanded back to his dungeon until the next assizes, the order to the jailer being that he should have close solitary confinement.

"Then," Fox says, "I was put into a tower, where the smoke of the other prisoners came up so thick, that it stood as dew upon the walls, and sometimes it was so thick that I could hardly see the candle when it burned; and I being locked under three locks, the under-jailer, when the smoke was great, would hardly be persuaded to come up to unlock one of the uppermost doors, for fear of the smoke, so that I was almost smothered. Besides, it rained in upon my bed, and many times, when I went to stop out the rain in the cold winter season, my shirt was wet through with the rain that came in upon me, while I was laboring to stop it out. And the place being high and open to the wind, sometimes as fast as I stopped it, the wind blew it out again. In this manner did I lie, all that long cold winter, till the next assize; in which time I was so starved with cold and rain, that my body was greatly swelled, and my limbs much benumbed."

At the March assizes in 1665, he went through the same sort of absurd trial again. Once more he found serious errors in the indictment, but was instantly held up by the call for an oath, which he could not take. In a moment of anger the judge ordered him removed from court and then sentence was pronounced on him in his absence which was contrary to the law. It was a terrible sentence of *præmunire*. This was an ancient

penalty contrived first by the Plantagenet kings for dealing with persons whom they wished to destroy. It had been revived in the period of the Reformation for disposing of persons who held a form of religion not in conformity with the ruling power. Now, under Charles II., it was brought in again to overwhelm those who refused the oath of allegiance and supremacy. By the penalty of *præmunire* the person sentenced was made an outlaw, had all his property confiscated, and was subject to perpetual imprisonment, or until the king issued a pardon. It was now pronounced on both George Fox and Margaret Fell, though the former being absent from court did not know what a terrible sentence had been passed upon him.

Fourteen months had passed since his arrest. He had spent most of the time in an appalling dungeon. He was guilty of no crime. He was pure in heart, innocent of all plots, loyal to the king, and punished only because he could not do what he believed the very Bible, on which he was asked to swear, told him not to do. He grew very weak and worn from his close confinement under such unsanitary conditions, but still he worked on with his pen and issued many papers and tracts from his castle-dungeon. Colonel Kirkby and the other justices were eager to get rid of him and wanted him removed from their jurisdiction. There was talk of sending him

"beyond seas," but finally an order was secured to transfer him to a remote castle in another part of England. He was brought out of his confinement one day in April, 1665, without knowing his destination. He was too weak to walk. He was carried by the men and placed on horseback and hurried away through the gazing crowds of Lancaster. It was a strange journey across England. A white, haggard man, in filthy, ill-smelling clothes, on a horse, which "the wicked jailer" would occasionally whip to make him skip and leap, riding from a castle in Lancaster to his new castle by the sea, in Scarborough. There was an escort of soldiers riding beside him, for there was "a great fear" that the prisoner might try to escape or be rescued by his dangerous friends! At length, fainting and exhausted, Fox reached his castle by the sea, and found himself once more in a prison cell where the rain came in upon him, and which, like the old one in Lancaster, "smoked exceedingly and was very offensive." In fact the smoke was so thick in the little room that Fox playfully told Sir Jordan Crosslands, the governor of the castle, who was a Roman Catholic, that he had lodged his prisoner in a kind of purgatory here on earth.

Fox spent fifty shillings to improve his cell, to stop the rain from coming in and to keep the smoke out, and he had succeeded in getting the

place more decent for habitation when he was unexpectedly moved to another room, which turned out to be worse than his original one had been. This new room was a terrible place for a weak, ill, prison-worn man to live in. His own description of it is very graphic and will make the reader vividly realize the kind of life the poor, long-suffering man had in this famous castle:

"When I had been at that charge, and made it somewhat tolerable, they removed me into a worse room, where I had neither chimney nor fire-hearth. This being to the sea-side and lying much open, the wind drove in the rain forcibly, so that the water came over my bed, and ran about the room, that I was fain to skim it up with a platter. And when my clothes were wet, I had no fire to dry them; so that my body was benumbed with cold, and my fingers swelled, that one was grown as big as two. Though I was at some charge in this room also, I could not keep out the wind and rain. Besides they would suffer few Friends to come to me, and many times not any, no, not so much as to bring me a little food; but I was forced for the first quarter to hire one, not a Friend, to bring me necessaries. Sometimes the soldiers would take it from her, and she would scuffle with them for it. Afterwards I hired a soldier to bring me water and bread, and something to make a fire of, when I was in a room where a

fire could be made. Commonly a threepenny loaf served me three weeks, and sometimes longer, and most of my drink was water with wormwood steeped or bruised in it. . . . Inasmuch as they kept me so very strait, not giving liberty for Friends to come to me, I spoke to the keepers of the castle to this effect: 'I did not know till I was removed from Lancaster castle, and brought prisoner to this castle of Scarbro, that I was convicted of a præmunire; for the judge did not give sentence upon me at the assizes in open court. But seeing I am now a prisoner here, if I may not have my liberty, let my friends and acquaintances have their liberty to come and visit me, as Paul's friends had among the Romans, who were not Christians but Heathens. For Paul's friends had their liberty; all that would, might come to him, and he had his liberty to preach to them in his hired house; but I cannot have liberty to go into the town, nor for my friends to come to me here. So you that go under the name of Christians, are worse in this respect than those Heathens were.'"

Although the officials of the castle would not allow any Friends to visit the prisoner and he was as "a man buried alive," they did permit other people to come and either gaze upon him or dispute with him. A number of Roman Catholics, who were friends of the governor, came,

out of curiosity, to discuss religion with him and he showed considerable skill and humor in his keen questions and answers with them. It must have been a great relief and refreshment to be able to use his pent up mind on these subjects which interested him more than anything else in the world did. He also had debates with Presbyterians, with knights, noble ladies, priests and laymen, and these visits not only broke the dreary monotony of his prison life; they enabled him to feel that, like St. Paul in Rome, he was spreading his truth, even while he suffered for it.

One of the most interesting of all his visitors was Dr. Cradock, who brought with him three clergymen and a titled lady. They debated at length about the taking of oaths, going over the usual Bible texts for argument. Then Fox turned the tables on the divinity doctor by asking him why his church was now excommunicating Friends when it had done nothing to minister to the spiritual condition of England at the time when Friends arose. "We might have turned Turks or Jews," Fox told him, "for any help we had from you." "Now," he added, "you have put us out of your church before you have got us into it and before you taught us to know your principles!"

At first Sir Jordan Crosslands had taken little interest in his Quaker prisoner, but in the course of time he came to realize what an unusual inmate

of his castle George Fox really was. Meantime some trouble came upon the governor of the castle which made him more serious and, Fox says, "more friendly." During the earlier period of the imprisonment at Scarborough the officers tried to scare Fox with dire threats. They told him that he was likely soon to be "hanged over the wall." The deputy-governor informed him that the king was holding him at Scarborough as a hostage, and that if there should be any popular uprising anywhere in the nation, Fox was to be "hung over the wall to keep the people down." On one particular occasion, when a marriage was being performed at Scarborough by Roman Catholic ceremony, the prison officials intimated to Fox that this would probably be a good time to have his hanging come off. "I am all ready for it," was the brave man's answer. "I have never feared death nor suffering in my life. I am an innocent, peaceable man, free from all plots and uprisings. I have always sought the good of all men. Bring out your gallows."

But during the last period of the imprisonment the governor grew kinder and more tender. He discovered the spirit of Fox and was ready to help him to get his freedom. He was a Member of Parliament and on one of his visits to London he spoke to "Esquire Marsh," of whom we have heard before, and told him how Fox was held all these

years in prison. "I would go a hundred miles barefoot to secure his liberty," was "Marsh's" enthusiastic response. Affairs, however, moved slowly. England was at war with Holland, and it is always easy to forget and overlook a lone man far away in a prison. But Fox's Friends in London did not forget him. Two of them, who had public influence, drew up an account of what he had suffered in his two castle imprisonments and carried the report to "Esquire Marsh," who took it to "the master of requests." The latter procured from the king an order to release Fox from his castle prison. The order declared that the king was convinced that George Fox was "a man principled against plotting and fighting," and was always more ready to discover plots than to make them, and that, therefore, it was the royal pleasure that he should be set free. As soon as the order was brought by a devoted Friend to Sir Jordan Crosslands he issued the following passport: "Permit the bearer hereof, George Fox, late a prisoner here, and now discharged by His Majesty's order, quietly to pass about his lawful occasions, without any molestation."

The discharge was dated September 1st, 1666, and closed an imprisonment which had begun January 11th, 1664, so that it lacked about three months of being three years long. The feeling of the castle governor toward his charge was

kind and friendly and Fox had come to respect his knightly keeper. He proposed to make a present to Sir Jordan, but the latter refused to receive anything, saying: "I will do you and your friends all the good I can, and I will never do you any hurt." "He continued loving," Fox says, "to his dying day." The officers of the castle, too, had felt the spirit and power of the man under their care and formed a high opinion of him. "He was as stiff as a tree," they said, "and as pure as a bell; for we could never bow him."

CHAPTER XIII

UNITED IN THE IMMORTAL SEED

While George Fox was standing the universe in Scarborough castle, London was suffering from a fearful plague that carried away a large part of the population, and the day after he was released from his prison the great fire of 1666 swept over the city, destroying thirteen thousand houses. Fox believed that he had foreseen this calamity. "As I was walking in my chamber" [apparently while he was in Lancaster castle], he says, "with my eye to the Lord, I saw the angel of the Lord with a glittering drawn sword stretched southward, as though the court had been all on fire."

As soon as he was once more a free man he set out immediately on a strenuous religious tour of the counties, having everywhere "large and blessed meetings." But though he seemed to have abnormal strength for a person who had just had three years of dungeon life, he was, nevertheless, now an aged and somewhat broken man. In years he was only forty-two and he had still almost twenty-four years of life before him, but the awful prisons had left their mark upon his body and he never again possessed the iron con-

stitution which was his before the jails had wasted him. "My joints and my body," he writes after quite a period of travel, "were so stiff and benumbed that I could hardly get on my horse or bend my joints; nor could I well bear to be near the fire or eat warm meat, I had been kept so long from it." A few years later he passed through a long and serious illness at Enfield, from which his friends never expected to see him recover, and on his voyage to America he was desperately ill. He says of this illness: "The many hurts and bruises I had formerly received, and the infirmities I had contracted in England by extreme cold and hardships that I had undergone in many long and sore imprisonments, returned upon me at sea." He had also a long period of great illness and physical weakness after landing in Barbadoes, "with much pain," he says, "in my bones, joints and my whole body, so that I could hardly get any rest." But his unconquerable spirit dominated his body and in spite of his bruises and weaknesses he made it go on serving his strong will and purpose.

In this later period of his ministry Fox was rewarded by the convincement of some remarkable men who brought new distinction and power to the Society which he had founded. The most famous of them all was William Penn, the son of Admiral Penn. As the founder of the great middle

colony and state which now bears his name, he has won a place of marked distinction in American history. His life is full of romance and daring as well as suffering, and he will always be celebrated for his defense of personal liberty at home and for his "holy experiment" in the Western colony. Robert Barclay of Scotland was another shining light in the Quaker group. Scholar and saint, he brought gifts which no other Friends possessed and it fell to his lot to write the great defense of the Quaker faith which every Friend read for two centuries, Barclay's *Apology*. Isaac Penington, mystic and saint, beautiful soul and gifted writer, was won to the cause before Fox went to his two castles. At Swannington meeting in 1658 he found God and felt the healing drop into his soul from under God's wings, and from that time until his death he used his pen and tongue to advance the truth which his own soul had discovered. Thomas Ellwood, John Milton's secretary, another highly gifted man, at great sacrifice, threw in his lot with the followers of Fox in 1660. Like their leader, they all suffered for their faith and they all gave the best they had in them for the truth which their souls had found.

During the long silent stretches of his imprisonment Fox had evidently been meditating deeply and thinking much of the future of the Society which had grown up so rapidly under his preach-

ing. There were many signs of weakness in it and lack of organization. He came out of prison with a resolve to prepare the Society for its great tasks in the world and to organize it more thoroughly while he was still with his Friends and had the strength and freedom to do it. He found Friends who were careless and disorderly and he felt that much more oversight of the members was needed. He recommended that monthly meetings should be established to take care of those who were poor and in need; to look after those who were suffering for their faith; to keep records of births and deaths and marriages and to have a careful oversight over the lives of the membership. There were some Friends who stoutly disapproved of so much system and method. They wanted everything left free for the individuals to decide according to their own light. These opposers of regulation and discipline gave Fox a vast amount of trouble and anxiety. He could stand persecution and he could face the mob and the prison, but it was much harder to endure the attacks and complaints and criticisms of his own followers. The rest of his life was to be largely occupied with this great work of organization and with smoothing differences and with bringing order out of chaos and disorder. It is not so interesting to read about as the victorious early campaigns through the counties, but it took even more pa-

tience and grace and wisdom, and it revealed in a new way the greatness of George Fox as a leader. He saw, too, at this time, the great importance of education and the training of the mind. He now advised the establishment of schools for boys and girls, who were to be taught "whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation"!

After a successful religious journey in Ireland, where he had "large and precious meetings," and where he gathered "a good, weighty and true people, sensible of the power of the Lord God and tender of His truth," he took one of the most interesting steps of his life. He joined himself in marriage with his dear friend and helper, Margaret Fell. She had been imprisoned at Lancaster with George Fox and after fourteen months of jail she had been sentenced under the statute of *præmunire* in 1665, and her imprisonment had lasted, with possibly slight breaks of freedom, until June, 1668. Even then, though temporarily released, the sentence still hung over her and made her a prison victim for yet many more years. While Fox was in Ireland she was using her joyous freedom in visiting the prisons where other Friends through the nation were suffering. She had taken her youngest daughter, Rachel, to the new girls' school at Shacklewell to learn everything "useful in the creation" and she was on a visit to her daughter Isabel who had married

William Yeamans of Bristol. Here in Bristol George Fox found her and won her as his true and loyal wife. His own account of how it happened is quaint and charming. He says:

"I had seen from the Lord a considerable time before, that I should take Margaret Fell to be my wife. And when I first mentioned it to her, she felt the answer of Life from God thereunto. But though the Lord had opened this thing to me, yet I had not received a command from the Lord, for the accomplishment of it then. Wherefore I let the thing rest, and went on in the work and service of the Lord as before, according as he led me; travelling up and down in this nation and through Ireland. But now being at Bristol, and finding Margaret Fell there, it opened in me from the Lord that the thing should be accomplished. After we had discoursed the matter together, I told her, if she also was satisfied with the accomplishment of it now, she should first send for her children; which she did. When the rest of her daughters were come, I asked both them and her sons in law, if they had anything against it, or for it; and they all severally expressed their satisfaction therein. Then I asked Margaret, if she had fulfilled and performed her husband's will to her children. She replied, "the children knew that." Whereupon I asked them, whether, if their mother married, they should not lose by

it. And I asked Margaret, whether she had done anything in lieu of it, which might answer it to the children? [All of which means, in plain English, that she had made arrangements and provision so that her children would not lose any of their rightful property if their mother married George Fox.] The children said, that she had answered it to them, and desired me to speak no more of it. I told them I was plain and would have all things done plainly; for I sought not any outward advantage to myself. So after I had thus acquainted the children with it, our intention of marriage was laid before Friends, both privately and publicly, to their full satisfaction, many of whom gave testimony thereunto that it was of God. Afterwards, a meeting being appointed for the accomplishment thereof, in the meetinghouse at Broad-Mead in Bristol, we took each other, the Lord joining us together in the honourable marriage, in the everlasting covenant and immortal Seed of life. In the sense whereof, living and weighty testimonies were borne thereunto by Friends, in the movings of the heavenly power which united us together. Then was a certificate relating both to the proceedings and the marriage, openly read, and signed by the relations, and by most of the ancient Friends of that city, besides many others from divers parts of the nation."

This marriage, which they both believed was

"in the immortal Seed of life"—i. e., according to the divine will and in unity with the eternal spirit of Jesus Christ—proved to be a very beautiful and happy one. For some years after they were thus united George Fox and his wife saw almost nothing of one another, but they were very closely joined together in sincere love through all this period of hard separation. Fox wrote many letters to his wife. They are brief, quaint, odd love letters, but they have the deep, true note of real affection. They generally begin: "My dear Heart in the Truth and Life that changeth not," and they close with some such phrase as this: "So no more, but my love in the Seed and Life that changeth not."

The reason they were so much separated was that Margaret Fox was taken back to prison almost at once after the marriage was accomplished and Fox not very much later took an extensive journey overseas. They had a week together in Bristol after they were united "in the immortal Seed of Life." After they traveled together a short distance they took leave of one another and parted to their "several services." "Margaret returned homewards to the north," Fox says, "and I passed on in the work of the Lord as before"—a week was all he could spare of the precious time which belonged to the Lord's work. Fox had expected to join his wife in Leicestershire—perhaps at his old home at

Fenny Drayton—but instead of coming south to meet him, as he asked her to do, she was "haled out of her house to Lancaster prison again, by an order obtained from the king and council, to fetch her back to prison upon the old *præmunire*." It looks as though Margaret Fox's son George, who was strongly opposed to the marriage with George Fox, may have had something to do with bringing about the arrest and reimprisonment of his mother under the *præmunire*. He did not share his sisters' love of Fox and he plainly plotted in London to bring the husband and wife into trouble. Fox wrote, "I am informed he [George Fell] hath been with Kirkby, Monk and such-like persons; and I understand his intent is to have Swarthmore. . . . The agreement thou made with him, he says, signifies nothing, thou being a prisoner." In any case, whether by unnatural intrigue, or through general opposition to the Quakers, this good woman, now fifty-five years old, almost immediately after her marriage, was hurried away from home to prison, where she was lodged from March, 1670, to April, 1671.

The Conventicle Act was renewed in 1670 with fresh vigor and the danger of arrest was greatly increased. This period was one of intense suffering for Friends and they never knew when they went to meeting on Sunday morning—"First-day," they called it—whether they would come

back again to their homes, or whether, as was more likely, they would be arrested and dragged away to prison, perhaps never to come home again. The Sunday after the new Act came into force Fox says: "I went to Grace-Church Street [meeting] where I expected the storm was most likely to begin." While Fox was preaching in the meeting, the constable with his soldiers came and pulled him down as he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." He was put in charge of the soldiers and the officer said to him, "You are the man I was looking for." After an examination Fox and the Friends who had been arrested with him were set at liberty. His Friends asked him where he was going now: "Why," he said, "I am going back to the meeting," and sure enough he went straight to Grace-Church Street! The meeting was already over and Fox went out to discover how the day had gone. "A glorious time it was," he says, "for the Lord's power came over all, and His everlasting truth got renown." The account continues: "As fast as some that were speaking were taken down [by the officers] others were moved of the Lord to stand up and speak; to the admiration of the people."

Under the strain of this great persecution upon his followers, Fox had a serious return of his old nervous troubles. "A great weight and oppression," he says, "fell upon my spirit." "I was

hardly able to ride upon my horse." "I was much spent, being so extremely laden and burdened with the world's spirits, that my life was oppressed under them." "I lay exceeding weak, and at last lost both hearing and sight." "Under great sufferings and travails, sorrows and oppressions, I lay several weeks, whereby I was brought so low and weak in body that few thought I could live." Gradually life and health and strength came back to him. At first he "recovered a little glimmering sight" and then, little by little, both sight and hearing returned and finally "the Lord's power," he says, "upheld me and enabled me to declare His eternal word of Life."

One of the first things he did after his recovery was to take up measures to secure the release of his wife from prison. He sent Martha Fisher and another woman to King Charles II. to plead for Margaret Fox's liberty. "They went in faith and in the Lord's power," Fox says, and they were successful. The king granted a discharge under his broad seal and cleared her and her estate from the *præmunire*.

Meantime Fox felt it "laid upon him by the Lord to go beyond seas to visit America." He wrote to his wife—his "dear Heart"—that she was at last a free woman and that she should "hasten to London," to see him off for America, "because the ship was then fitting for the voyage."

The ship was a yacht named the *Industry*. Accompanied by his wife and several Friends he went to Gravesend, on the 12th of August, 1671, to go forth on his momentous journey. A large group of Friends were to go with him to America as companions in the ministry. They were William Edmundson, Thomas Briggs, John Rous, John Stubbs, Solomon Eccles, James Lancaster, John Cartwright, Robert Widders, George Pattison, John Hull, Elizabeth Hooton and Elizabeth Miers. One wonders why Margaret Fox did not go too, but no doubt there was good reason why she remained behind in England. She went on with him as far as Deal, where they separated not to meet again for many months and even years.

The ship was a leaky craft so that both seamen and passengers, of whom there were fifty, had to man the pumps both day and night. One day, we hope it was the worst one, she sucked in sixteen inches of water in two hours' time. They had a very close escape from a "Sallee man of war," that is a Moorish pirate ship, and Fox always thought that the escape was a miraculous deliverance. He himself, as has already been said, was desperately ill on the voyage, though he did not suffer at all from seasickness. The passage took seven weeks, and, late in the evening of September third, the party landed on the island of Barbadoes with Fox still a very ill man.

CHAPTER XIV

VISITING THE "SEED" IN AMERICA

It seems likely that George Fox had an attack of what would now be called rheumatic fever on the ship and during the early period of his stay in Barbadoes. There was much work to be done in the island but he could do very little. He could neither walk nor ride. The wickedness on the island depressed him and lay "as a weight and load" upon him. Gradually he began to recover and the fervor and energy of his spirit returned. He visited the governor of the island to whom he afterwards wrote a famous letter, explaining and interpreting his religious faith. Large meetings were held and many lives were reached with the message of Fox and his Friends.

After three months of activity in Barbadoes he crossed over to Jamaica and had much successful service in the great land that Oliver Cromwell had recently added to the colonial possessions of England. Here Elizabeth Hooton died, departing "in peace like a lamb, bearing testimony to truth at her departure." Seven weeks were spent in Jamaica and then Fox sailed, with most of his group of companions, for Maryland. It proved

to be a very difficult, slow and dangerous passage. The ship often seemed ready to sink and the tackling was stripped off by the awful violence of the storm. It took over six weeks to make the passage from Jamaica to the coast of Maryland, and when they entered Patuxent River, safe and sound, they praised the Lord "whose power hath dominion over all, whom the winds and the seas obey."

John Burnyeat, a remarkable Quaker apostle, who traveled extensively among the American Friends, had preceded Fox to Maryland and had appointed a general meeting for Friends in that colony. It began just as the party from Jamaica arrived. Great throngs of people came to it, "some of considerable quality in the world's account," and the meeting lasted four days. Fox was now in pretty good health and vigor. Travel by boat and horseback was hard and taxing, but he stood it finely. "Blessed be the Lord," he says, "I was preserved from taking hurt." Everywhere he went in America one of his first interests was to visit the Indians and to give his message to them. "It was upon me from the Lord," he says, "to send to the Indian emperor and his kings to come to the meeting. The emperor [head chief] came and was at it; but his kings, lying further off, could not reach in time; yet they came after with their cockarooses [i. e.,

head men]. I had in the evening two good opportunities with them; they heard the word of the Lord willingly and confessed to it. They carried themselves very courteously and lovingly."

Having pretty well covered the Maryland territory, Fox started off northward on a hard and difficult journey to New England. It was made on horseback and by boats, most of the way being through thick forests. The crossing of the Delaware was attended with "great danger." They had Indian guides who could generally speak a little English and were "very loving." New Jersey was a wilderness country, where, Fox says, "we travelled a whole day together without seeing man or woman, house or dwelling-place."

A great meeting, called the Half Year's Meeting, was about to be held at this time at Oyster Bay, on Long Island, where there were many Friends. Fox attended this meeting, which lasted four days, like the one in Maryland, and it was "of great service to the truth." Having traversed Long Island he sailed for Newport where he proposed to attend the New England Yearly Meeting. Friends came to this meeting from all parts of New England, from as far east as Dover, in the colony of New Hampshire. Newport itself was a great Quaker center. Nicholas Easton, a prominent Quaker, the founder of Newport, was then governor of Rhode Island. George Fox stayed at

his house, though we may be pretty sure that he had to visit many other homes besides in this famous Quaker city. The Yearly Meeting lasted six days and was attended by multitudes of Friends and others. When it was over the people were so moved and stirred that they found it almost impossible to separate. Fox says: "It was hard for Friends to part; for the glorious power of the Lord, which was over all, and His blessed truth and life flowing amongst them, had so knit and united them together, that they spent two days in taking leave one of another, and of the Friends of the island; and then, being mightily filled with the presence and power of the Lord they went away, with joyful hearts, to their various habitations, in the several colonies where they lived." Later, after the great meeting was over and the Friends had separated, Fox visited Providence where Roger Williams, the founder of the colony, lived. He believed in liberty and he had done much to establish freedom of thought, but he did not approve of Fox and he did not like the ideas of the Quakers. For some reason he did not come to the meeting to dispute with Fox, as everybody expected he would do. But after Fox had held his great meeting in Providence and had left the colony, Roger Williams rowed in his boat all the way to Newport, thirty miles, to debate with him! Afterwards, when he found that

Fox was gone, he wrote a book against him, which he called *George Fox Digged Out of His Burrowes*, and Fox answered it with another book which he called *The New England Firebrand Quenched.*

It is difficult to tell why George Fox did not visit the other New England colonies. There were many large meetings of Friends in Massachusetts and along the Piscataqua River in New Hampshire. John Burnyeat and some of the other travelers went to these eastern meetings, but Fox saw only the Rhode Island meetings. It is not possible to suppose that he was afraid of the magistrates in Boston. It would have been the first time in his life that he was ever afraid of anybody. He appears to have felt that he was more needed in the southern colonies and that his companions could do the necessary work in the other parts of New England. While he was visiting Narraganset, where the people were "mightily affected" by his preaching, he heard that some of the magistrates said among themselves, that if they had money enough they would hire him to be their minister. As soon as George Fox heard this remark reported he said: "It is time for me to be gone; for if their eye is so much to me, or to any of us, they will not discover their own true Teacher." Whereupon he started back toward the south.

He had a very rough and stormy journey along the Sound to Oyster Bay. From there he went to Flushing, where, under the famous oak trees, he had "a glorious heavenly meeting." Then he hired a sloop; and, the wind serving, "set out for the New Country, now called Jersey." He sailed to Middletown Harbor and then rode thirty miles, "through woods and bad bogs, one worse than all the rest—a place which the people of the country called Purgatory." On this rough journey across New Jersey an accident befell one of the travelers, the account of which is graphically given in the *Journal:* "John Jay, a Friend of Barbadoes, who came with us from Rhode Island and intended to accompany us through the woods of Maryland, being to try a horse, got upon his back; and the horse fell a-running, and cast him down upon his head, and broke his neck, as the people said. They that were near him took him up as dead, carried him a good way, and laid him on a tree. I got to him as soon as I could; and feeling him, concluded he was dead. As I stood by him, pitying him and his family, I took hold of his hair, and his head turned any way, his neck was so limber. Whereupon I took his head in both my hands, and setting my knees against the tree, I raised his head, and perceived there was nothing out or broken that way. Then I put one hand under his chin, and the other behind

his head, and raised his head two or three times with all my strength, and brought it in. I soon perceived his neck began to grow stiff again, and then he began to rattle in the throat, and quickly after to breathe. The people were amazed; but I bid them have a good heart, be of good faith and carry him into the house. They did so and set him by the fire. I bid them get him something warm to drink, and put him to bed. After he had been in the house a while he began to speak; but he did not know where he had been. The next day we passed away (and he with us, pretty well) about sixteen miles to a meeting at Middletown, through woods and bogs, and over a river; where we swam our horses, and got over ourselves upon a hollow tree. Many hundred miles did he travel with us after this. To this meeting came most of the people of the town. A glorious meeting we had, and the Truth was over all; blessed be the great Lord God for ever!"

It is not necessary to suppose that there was anything miraculous about this cure. It shows, however, a striking trait in the character of George Fox. He always knows how to meet emergencies. He is ready for any kind of crisis. While the others stand around and weep over a dying companion, he steps in and *acts*. He does the wisest and best thing he knows of to do under the circumstances. He has a faith and confidence

which count for much. His dear friend William Penn, who traveled much with him, "by night and by day, by sea and by land," says: "I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service or occasion." On the return journey from the northern colonies to the southern Fox traveled through a long section of what is now Pennsylvania. He crossed the Delaware not far from the place where Burlington, New Jersey, is now located, and traversed "the woods on the other side of Delaware Bay."

It is more than likely that this journey had an important historical influence both on the later settlement of New Jersey and on the building of the great Quaker colony on the western shores of the Delaware. He visited William Penn, at Rickmansworth, almost as soon as he was back again in England, and among the many things they talked about, we may be sure one subject was the possibility of transferring the persecuted and suffering Friends in England and Wales to the safe haven of refuge in these virgin forests along the two sides of the Delaware River.

It proved to be no easy task to cross the creeks and rivers which flow into the Delaware. One of these Fox calls "a desperate river," which was "hazardous to us and our horses." The Christiana River was also hard to cross. The party of Friends went over in Indian canoes, swimming their horses

behind. The main difficulty of the passage was climbing the steep and miry banks, where the horses nearly floundered. All along the journey the Indians received much attention from George Fox. They always "heard the truth attentively" and were "very loving." The goal of the returning journey for the present seems to have been Tred Haven on the Chesapeake. Here a great five days' meeting was held, to which everybody appears to have come, magistrates and their wives, persons of chief account in the country, Papists and Protestants. As many as a thousand people, in this new country, flocked to the meetings. "I went by boat," Fox says, "every day four or five miles to it, and there were so many boats at that time passing upon the river, that it was almost like the Thames. The people said, 'There were never so many boats seen there together before'; and one of the justices said, 'He never saw so many people together in that country before.'" It was "a heavenly meeting," "Friends were sweetly refreshed, the people were satisfied and many were convinced."

The effect of Fox's visit to Maryland was very marked on the general religious life of the colony. He stirred the entire country around the Chesapeake to fresh life. He next went on further south to visit the scattered groups of Friends in Virginia, where he found "much openness"

and where "truth spread," and then he set out for the Carolinas. The way was very difficult, through pathless forests, "plashy bogs and swamps." The travelers were often soaking wet and had to sleep uncovered in the woods. For a single night they had the shelter of a friendly house at Somerton, in southern Virginia, where they had the comfort of a house floor before an open fire and were waited upon by a woman who "had a sense of God."

They sailed in a canoe down the Chowan River, then called the Macocomocock. After holding a "blessed meeting" with the people in that part of the country, the little party of travelers canoed the river Roanoke to Coney-Hoe Bay. Here they borrowed a boat, as the water splashed over their canoe, and they went to visit the governor of the colony. Fox's account is an interesting one. He says: "With this boat we went to the governor's house; but the water in some places was so shallow that the boat being laden, could not swim; so that we were fain to put off our shoes and stockings and wade through the water some distance. The governor, with his wife, received us lovingly; but a doctor there would needs dispute with us. And truly his opposing us was of good service, giving occasion for the opening of many things to the people, concerning the light and Spirit of God, which he denied to be in every

one; and affirmed that it was not in the Indians. Whereupon I called an Indian to us, and asked him, 'Whether or not when he lied, or did wrong to any one, there was not something in him that reproved him for it?' He said, 'There was such a thing in him, that did so reprove him; and he was ashamed when he had done wrong, or spoken wrong.' So we shamed the doctor before the governor and the people; in so much that the poor man ran out so far, that at length he would not own the Scriptures. We tarried at the governor's that night; and next morning he very courteously walked with us himself about two miles through the woods, to a place whither he had sent our boat about to meet us. Taking leave of him, we entered our boat, and went that day about thirty miles to Joseph Scott's, one of the representatives of the country. There we had a sound, precious meeting; the people were tender, and much desired after meetings. Wherefore at a house about four miles further, we had another meeting, to which the governor's secretary came, who was chief secretary of the province, and had been formerly convinced."

The return journey was more difficult even than the southward journey had been, for the river currents were now all against the travelers. They lay night after night in their wet clothes until they reached Somerton, Virginia, where

they had the joy of the open hearth fire in the home of the woman who had "a sense of God." For three succeeding weeks Fox visited Friends and meetings in Virginia and great power seems to have attended his preaching,—it "struck a dread and brought a reverence upon the people's minds."

Finally, Fox had a third and last great visit through the settlements of the Maryland colony. He had traveled two hundred miles from Nancemond in Virginia, sailing along the coast in a small sailboat over which the waters often splashed, landing on the shore for the night, where he slept in his wet clothes before a fire of logs and where the wolves often howled about the fire. Fox himself often sat at the helm like a tried sailor and steered the boat. He arrived at Patuxent "very weary," but ready for another "precious meeting." This last tour of Maryland occurred in mid-winter and the weather was "bitterly cold." On his boat journeys to meetings, he was sometimes chilled to the bone and almost lost the use of his hands, they were "so frozen and benumbed with the cold." It was, however, a time of renewed life and power. "The mighty presence of the Lord was seen and felt over all." A tide of life was raised throughout this entire region which lasted in force for many generations. In fact, this American visit of George Fox proved to be one of the greatest religious events in the

colonies during the seventeenth century. When the ship "Woodhouse" landed in Rhode Island "the irresistible word of the Lord" had come to one of the Quaker missionaries on the ship and he prophesied that "the Seed in America shall be as the sands of the sea in number." By "Seed" he meant the group of persons in America who should discover the Light of Christ and live by it and so form the Spiritual Church of the future. Wherever there was anybody ready to receive the truth and to spread it to others, there was already the "seed" of a new and purer society, the beginning of a better world. Well, George Fox came to visit this "seed" in America and to spread it into new places. When he had finished his work around the Chesapeake he felt that he was "clear," that is, that he had done all he came to do in America, and with a free and joyous heart he sailed away for old England where more work and more sufferings and more love were awaiting him. The return passage was a wild and stormy one, the waves of the tempestuous sea rising around their little ship like mountains, but the wind blew in the right direction and carried them rapidly across to their homeland, and they arrived safely in Bristol, the 20th of June, 1673, in record speed time, refreshed in spirit and improved in health.

CHAPTER XV

IN WORCESTER JAIL

As soon as George Fox arrived in England from his American journey and was hailed by his friends with great joy, he wrote the following glowing letter to his wife:

"Dear Heart,

"This day we came into Bristol near night, from the sea; glory to the Lord God over all for ever, who was our convoy and steered our course! The God of the whole earth, of the seas and winds, who made the clouds his chariot, beyond all words, blessed be his name forever! He is over all in his great power and wisdom, Amen. Robert Widders and James Lancaster are with me, and we are well; glory to the Lord for ever, who hath carried us through many perils, perils by water, and in storms, perils by pirates and robbers, perils in the wilderness and amongst false professors! Praises to him whose glory is over all for ever, Amen! Therefore mind the fresh life, and live all to God in it. I intend (if the Lord will) to stay a while this away; it may be till the fair. So no more, but my love to all Friends." G. F.

Margaret Fox hurried with all speed from

Swarthmore to Bristol to meet her husband. Two of her daughters with their husbands, and William Penn and his wife, also came to share in the joyous greetings to the returned traveler who had faced the perils of sea and wilderness. A great public meeting was held in Bristol and "the Lord's infinite power" was felt to be "over all." Fox preached a memorable sermon on this occasion and the spirits of the entire group were uplifted. After visiting a number of communities and holding many "precious meetings," the party came to Rickmansworth, where they stopped for a visit with William Penn and where we may believe there was much talk about America.

As they proceeded northward, after a visit to London and to the Quaker schools for boys and girls, and came on through Oxfordshire, Fox had a strong intimation that a new prison experience was coming upon him. "As I was sitting at supper," he says, "I felt that I was taken, yet I said nothing then to any one about it." The next day after this inward warning came to him, Fox attended "a large and precious meeting" in a barn at Armscott in Worcestershire. The meeting passed off undisturbed. After Friends had gone home from the meeting Fox was sitting in a Friend's parlor talking to a group of Friends when suddenly a justice of the peace and a "priest" who was the informer, came to arrest him for

having attended a meeting, against the Conventicle Law.[1] They came too late to find the meeting still going on, because, Fox says, the priest had to delay his coming as it was the christening day for his child and he "stayed for the sprinkling." But, though they thus had no real ground for the arrest, they seized Fox and his son-in-law Thomas Lower and took them away to Worcester Jail. It was naturally a terrible blow to Margaret Fox who had been separated from her husband almost all the time since they were married, and who was now hoping for quiet, happy days in Swarthmore Hall. Fox himself did not enjoy the prospect of another long prison experience; but he had learned to keep calm and to face whatever came to him in the course of his duty. He at once wrote this brave letter to his "Dear Heart":

"Dear Heart,

"Thou seemedst to be a little grieved when I was speaking of prisons, and when I was taken; be content with the will of the Lord God. For when I was at John Rous's at Kingston, I had a sight of my being taken prisoner, and when I was at Bray Doily's in Oxfordshire, as I sat at supper, I saw I was taken; and I saw I had a suffering to undergo. But the Lord's power is over all; blessed be his holy name for ever!"

[1] In 1670, a new Conventicle Act, more drastic and severe, than the former one, had become a law.

Thomas Lower had friends at court, his brother being the King's physician, and he might have been set free if he would have accepted his own freedom and consented to be separated from George Fox. This he would not do. He chose to remain and suffer with his father-in-law rather than to accept freedom alone. When the case came to trial at the Court Sessions and there appeared to be no evidence against Fox and his companion, the officials resorted to the old scheme of ensnaring the Quakers with the demand for an oath. The Judge said: "Mr. Fox, you are a famous man and for all we know you may be innocent, but we shall be better satisfied if you will take the oath of allegiance and supremacy." Then they read the oath and asked Fox if he would take it. "I told them, 'I never took an oath in my life, but I had always been true to the government; that I was cast into the dungeon at Derby, and kept a prisoner six months there, because I would not take up arms against King Charles at Worcester fight; and for going to meetings was carried up out of Leicestershire, and brought before Oliver Cromwell, as a plotter to bring in King Charles. And ye know,' said I, 'in your own consciences, that we, the people called Quakers, cannot take an oath, or swear in any case, because Christ hath forbidden it. But as to the matter or substance contained in the oaths, this I

can and do say, that I do own and acknowledge the king of England to be the lawful heir and successor to the realm of England; and do abhor all plots and plotters, and contrivances against him; and I have nothing in my heart but love and good-will to him and all men, and desire his and their prosperity; the Lord knows it, before whom I stand, an innocent man. And as to the oath of supremacy, I deny the Pope, and his power, and his religion, and abhor it with my heart.' While I was speaking, they cried, 'give him the book;' and I said, 'the book saith, "Swear not at all."' Then they cried, 'take him away, jailer;' and I still speaking on, they were urgent upon the jailer, crying, 'take him away, we shall have a meeting here; why do you not take him away? that fellow (meaning the jailer) loves to hear him preach.' Then the jailer drew me away, and as I was turning from them, I stretched out my arm and said, 'the Lord forgive you who cast me into prison for obeying the doctrine of Christ.' Thus they apparently broke their promise in the face of the country; for they promised I should have free liberty to speak, but now they would not give it to me; and they promised they would not ensnare us, yet now they tendered me the oaths on purpose to ensnare me."

Again Thomas Lower had an opportunity to go free, but he would not leave his father and

stayed on in the prison. It was decided to send Fox up to London for trial and the under-sheriff appointed Thomas Lower as his deputy to escort the prisoner to London, so that these two men went off alone to the trial before the King's Bench, with the Chief Justice presiding. Fox was kindly and leniently treated, and allowed to lodge at a Friend's house while the trial was proceeding. Every effort was made to induce him to take an oath, but he was as immovable as a mountain. In the end he was sent back to Worcester Jail but was allowed to go his own way and at his own leisure, provided only that he should be there without fail for the April Court Assizes. He spent some time in London and then went by slow stages down to Worcester. He walked to the jail without any keeper and turned himself over to the authorities. He was put in charge of a boy eleven years old!

Again, at the Sessions, the old question of the oath came up and was discussed at length. He declared himself ready to sign a paper approving of the King's government and setting forth his loyalty, but to take an oath he would not, even if he remained till doomsday in the prison. Once more the case was postponed to the next session of Court and he returned to his imprisonment. At the next session the jailer's son offered to give bail for Fox and let him have his freedom. The

Court decided to let him go at large without bail until the next Court sessions, because they were thoroughly convinced that he was not a dangerous subject. By this provision he was allowed to go up to London and attend the yearly meeting in May, 1674.

Soon after this meeting was over, which was "glorious beyond expression," Fox returned to Worcester again for trial. The old bugaboo of the oath came up again, and the Court now threatened to inflict the sentence of *præmunire* upon him if he continued to refuse the oath. He faced the terrible penalty unmoved and went back to prison. A serious attack of illness came upon him soon after this and he appears to have gone through another experience of a similar sort to those already described. Death seemed to hover over him and yet an invisible power sustained and refreshed the broken man. "One night," he says, "as I was lying awake upon my bed in the glory of the Lord, which was over all, it was said unto me, 'The Lord has a great deal more work for thee to do for Him, before He takes thee to Himself.'" With this consciousness of divine love and care he could face the lonely days and the hard fare and even the weakness of his prison-worn body.

Meantime Margaret Fox went to see the King in person and to plead for justice to her long-suffer-

ing husband. The only way out seemed to be a pardon from the King, but Fox would not accept a pardon. A pardon would indicate that he was guilty and that he would not admit. "I had rather lain in prison all my days," Fox says, "than have come out in any way dishonorable to the truth." He insisted on a fair trial and a chance to defend himself. It was finally decided to bring him up once more to London, for trial before the King's Bench. Thomas Corbet, an able councillor at law, pleaded his case before Sir Matthew Hale, the Chief Justice. A complete victory was won. The indictment was quashed, and Fox was granted his liberty. Some of the old adversaries who had dogged him at each session, tried to induce the Chief Justice to demand the oath of him, on the ground that he was a dangerous man and ought not to be allowed at large. Judge Hale replied that he had heard rumors that George Fox was dangerous, but that he had heard many more reports that he was a good man—and he ordered the unconquerable man freed by proclamation. He had been under arrest and imprisonment for fourteen months. He was freed in time to attend London Yearly Meeting in 1675—a time when "the everlasting power of God" was manifested, and toward the end of June he was once more permitted to be in Swarthmore Hall with his wife. Colonel Kirkby, his old persecutor, now

changed and softened, came to visit him in the Hall and bid him welcome into the country, and, Fox says, "he carried himself very lovingly!"

However attractive Swarthmore Hall must have seemed after American forests and Worcester prison quarters, nothing could long hold George Fox from his religious travels. The "Seed" in England needed him, and in a very short time he was off again on long journeys through the counties. Now one Friend and now another accompanied him and everywhere in Quaker communities he was welcomed and appreciated. He steadily improved the organization and the discipline; he corrected errors and wrong practices; he encouraged the weak and he aroused and inspired the whole membership.

In 1677, a new field of foreign service opened for him and with old time enthusiasm he prepared for new dangers and struggles. "It was," he says, "upon me from the Lord to go to Holland, to visit Friends and to preach the gospel there, and in some parts of Germany." His two great friends, William Penn and Robert Barclay, went on this journey with him. Besides these two pillars he had also in his company George Keith, John Furley, Isabel Yeamans Fox's step-daughter, and a number of others. They found many Friends in Holland and many more people who were near-Friends and sympathetic with the teach-

ings of Fox. They held great meetings and debated with Baptists and Seekers and Brownists and many more little groups of Christians. Fox says that "the everlasting truth was declared among them." One of the most interesting episodes of this visit was the happy fellowship with Princess Elizabeth, one of the most remarkable women in Europe at this time. She was the granddaughter of King James I. of England and the daughter of Frederick, Elector Palatine and King of Bohemia. She was a great scholar, a friend of Descartes, the philosopher, and she was a devoted earnest Christian, always eager to learn more truth and to discover more light. William Penn and Robert Barclay had already visited her at a former time. Fox was unable to have a personal visit with her, and so he wrote her a religious epistle setting forth to her his views and teaching, which he sent by the hand of his step-daughter. Princess Elizabeth greatly appreciated it and wrote him a beautiful answer, in which she promised to follow his advice as far as God should give her light to do so.

George Fox, with an interpreter, took an extensive journey in Germany, visiting many German cities and hunting out groups of mystics and spiritual people who were prepared for his message. Many were reached and convinced, and some who later came to find homes in Pennsylvania were first drawn to Friends by this famous visit in 1677.

Fox went over to Holland again, but not to Germany, in 1684. On this second visit he met most of the Friends on the Continent, especially those in Holland and Germany, at a great meeting in Amsterdam. He had at this time an interesting visit with a very remarkable Dutchman named Galenus Abrahams, a leader among the "Seekers" in Holland. William Penn and Robert Barclay had debated with him on the former visit, but Fox had not taken part in the debate, because Abrahams refused to discuss with him. When Fox fixed his gaze upon him and started to talk with him, he became embarrassed and cried out: "Take thy eyes off me; they pierce me!" But on this second visit Abrahams changed and was "very loving and tender and confessed in some measure to truth." These two journeys to the Continent complete the foreign travels of George Fox. His "disciples" went to almost all parts of the world. They made their way to the Sultan; they visited the Pope; they went to the uttermost parts of the earth. But he felt that his duty lay for the most part in building up the Society which had grown up around him in England.

There were still some serious returns of persecution. As of old, George Fox was always to be found where the danger was the greatest. When the arrests under the Conventicle Law became thick and frequent in 1683, he always went

to the London meeting which was most likely to be invaded by the officers, and once again, though now an old and broken man, he risked the chance of a new imprisonment, but it did not fall upon him this time. His imprisonments were over. In 1688 a great release of prisoners for conscience' sake was made by the King. Many hundreds of Friends came forth from the cells where they had lain for months and years, and great joy thrilled through the heart of Fox to see his friends free. From this time until his death Fox traveled less and slowed down in his labors. His body was not able any longer to stand the strains it once had borne. He found himself compelled to go to the country frequently for fresh air, as London, with its fogs, seemed to oppress him. He was often in the country with William Penn, watching the shaping of the great plans for the new colony in America, and when he was not preaching or journeying he was writing tracts and epistles and books. There were two periods between his last great imprisonment and his death, when he spent a good deal of time at Swarthmore Hall. His wife was deeply affectionate toward him, her daughters loved him like an own father, and he would have had the tenderest care if he could have felt free to spend his declining years in that quiet retreat, but he was fashioned for struggle and service, and he had to work while any

strength remained. So long as his body held his tireless spirit in it, he was always moving forward and always busy with some work for the spread of the truth and the light, but, whether he thought about it or not, his body was wearing out and was fast approaching its limit of endurance. "I was hardly able," he says in 1688, the year of the great English Revolution, "to stay in a meeting the whole time; and after a meeting I had to lie down on a bed."

CHAPTER XVI

"ALL OF GOD ALMIGHTY'S MAKING"

On the tenth of January, 1691, George Fox went on First Day morning (Sunday) to Grace-Church Street Meeting in London. It was a very large meeting and, persecution now being over, it was quiet and undisturbed by officers. George Fox preached on that occasion the last sermon of his life. Those who heard it felt that it opened "many deep and weighty things with great power and clearness." Then, having finished his sermon, he kneeled down and prayed, with his whole being moved, his face radiant and his spirit full of reverence and awe. Under the covering of that mighty prayer the meeting closed, the people all shook hands and scattered to their homes. Fox went home with Henry Goldney in White Hart Court, near the meetinghouse by that name. A little group of devoted Friends walked with him, still under the spell and power of the great meeting, just ended. As they went quietly along through the street, Fox told his Friends that he felt a chill come over him and a cold seemed to strike into his heart. "But," he added, "I am glad I was there at that meeting; now I am clear, I am

fully clear." That fine old word "clear" meant that he had done his full duty and had completely finished what God had given him to do.

He often found it necessary to lie down for a little while after he had preached a powerful sermon, for all his vital powers seemed exhausted with the pouring out of his spirit, and he thought at first that this chill was only a result of his usual weakness of body after a great effort. He soon got up from the bed and tried to walk about, but there was no strength to command his body. It was quite worn out and had come at last to the full end of what it could do. He soon returned to his bed and lay peaceful and contented, like a tired child tucked comfortably into bed by its mother. His mind remained clear and unclouded. He had once before in his life seen that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but that an infinite ocean of light and love flowed over the ocean of darkness, and so now he rested calm and undisturbed in the consciousness of the infinite love of God.

He talked much about spreading the truth and how after he was gone the work must still go forward by pen and word. There was no sign of fear, no note of sadness, no mark of defeat. Once he said to those about him: "All is well; the Seed of God reigns over all and over death itself. I am weak of body but the power of God is over

all." For nearly three days the final illness lasted, with steadily increasing weakness of body and growing triumph of spirit. The ancient account very happily says: "He lay in a heavenly frame of mind, and between the hours of nine and ten in the evening of the third day of the week, he quietly departed this life in peace, and sweetly fell asleep in the Lord, whose blessed truth he had livingly and powerfully preached."

His Friends from far and near flocked in to the great funeral in White Hart Court meetinghouse, where the story of the labors and dangers and sufferings of the valiant life were lovingly told and the beauty and sublimity of his faith in God were set forth with the triumphs of truth which he proclaimed. Then his Friends bore the worn-out body to its last resting place among the graves of faithful martyrs for the light, in Bunhill-Fields.

His "Dear Heart," Margaret, wrote a beautiful and affectionate testimony to his memory and the Morning Meeting in London sent out to all Friends everywhere a tender epistle giving an account of what the Lord had done through this faithful servant of the truth. But the most remarkable of all the sincere personal appreciations of George Fox was the one written by his intimate friend and fellow-laborer, William Penn. It is done in beautiful style. It breathes a noble spirit and it reveals the genuine character of the

man whom it seeks to portray. It touches upon simple traits of his person and of his behavior and it also deals with the deepest features of his inner soul. He tells us that his friend was "civil in his behavior," i. e., refined, "beyond all forms of breeding"; "very temperate, eating little and sleeping less, though a bulky person." Though he had little book-learning and was ignorant of what passed in his day for science, yet "he had in him," Penn says, "the foundation of all useful and commendable knowledge and cherished it everywhere," and he always showed surprising skill in answering difficult questions. In short, in a fine, swift phrase Penn says: "In all things he aquitted himself like a *man*, yea a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man; a divine and a naturalist and *all of God Almighty's making*." He dwells tenderly upon the way people loved his dear friend "with unfeigned and unfading love"; of his majestic presence; of his awful, living, reverent frame in prayer; of his power to discern other persons' spirits and to master his own; of the unique and original quality of his personality; of his ability to go to the heart and marrow of things and of his power to stand the universe, with its storms and waterspouts. With a light and splendid touch he indicates the final triumph over death: "As he lived, so he died; feeling the same eternal power, that had raised and preserved him, in his last

moments. So full of assurance was he, that he triumphed over death; and so even in his spirit to the last, as if death were hardly worth notice or a mention."

Such, then, was our new kind of hero, who lived and wrought and suffered for the truth and for the kingdom of Christ. His religious message, like the man himself, was direct, clear and simple. He would have nothing to do with sham or insincerity or artificial schemes. Religion for him was a way of living, not merely something written in a book. It begins with a vital experience of the living God, who is near at hand, dwelling, moving, working, speaking in man's heart. Every time something in the soul points out the right course of action and reveals what is wrong, God is there. Whenever truth triumphs over error and light over darkness and purity over evil and goodness over wickedness and love over hate there God is working His work of the new creation in the world to-day. His kingdom comes as fast as people like us turn toward the true light and love it and follow it and do it. God is not far off above the sky or hidden in the past history of the world, a Being who once revealed Himself to a chosen few and then ceased to speak to human hearts. He is always speaking to men, always sending out His light and love, always revealing His will. He is as near the soul as is the air to the

bird. This was the central teaching of George Fox, and something like this he preached through the English counties and along the Atlantic coastline of America, in the West Indies, in Wales, in Ireland, in Scotland, in Holland and in Germany.

This idea, this "truth," he always called it, made him believe in the infinite preciousness and worth of every person in the world. Close behind the human face was the holy habitation of God. Here within was the only true temple and here every listening soul, no matter how poor or how humble, might hear the voice of the infinite One. It made him believe, too, that woman was in every way man's companion and equal. One was not more precious or more exalted than the other. Through both alike God could speak and through both alike He could do His spiritual work for the making of a new world after the divine pattern. He did not debate about women's rights. He proclaimed their equal privilege and responsibility with men and called upon them to rise up and do the mighty work in the world for which they were made.

He gave a new importance to silence in worship. If God was near the soul, as he kept saying He was, then one way to discover Him and to hear His voice speaking was to become quiet and still, so that He could be heard. When we wish to hear an important message over the telephone we

prepare for it by hushing all conversation and unneccessary noises in the room. We give the message a *chance* to reach us, which it would not have if the din prevailed around us. So, too, with the greatest of all messages, we must prepare for it. We must listen before we talk. We must hearken before we speak. Because George Fox believed this he arranged for periods of silence in his meetings. He preferred to listen rather than to speak and only to speak after he had heard God speak.

He taught that, in any case, religion is not words, words, words, but real experience of God. It is always better to see a sunset than to hear a description of one; it is worth much more to see the Sistine Madonna than to read about it in a book; it is much more thrilling to climb a mountain peak than to see a picture of a man climbing one; and it is infinitely more important to feel the tender presence of the living God than it is to hear somebody tell how Abraham and Elijah, ages ago, felt it. George Fox knew this fact, he himself had had this firsthand experience and he called his generation to get the same experience for themselves. He meant to put vital religion within the reach of everybody. He wanted to make everybody his own priest. He hoped to make religion as free and as universal as sunlight and air. He tried to reproduce in the world of his day the kind of Church which the New Testa-

ment tells about in its wonderful pages. It would be a Church in which everybody should have a part and a share. It would be a Church with Christ for the real Head of it, a Church with the living Spirit of God moving and working in all its members. It would be a Church through which the will of God was constantly being freshly revealed, a living, growing, expanding, transforming Church.

Because he believed these things he was a man full of faith and hope and good cheer. "The Seed of God reigns," were his living words as well as his dying words. "An ocean of light and love flows over the ocean of darkness." You cannot down a man who has a faith like that. Prisons have no terror for him, persecution does not break his nerve. He knows that God is really working all things up to better and that the brave man can wait in patience. "Love the truth," he once said, "more than all, and go on in the mighty power of God as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." We can surely agree with the testimony which his intimate friend Thomas Ellwood gave him: He was "valiant for the Truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, unwearied in laboring for it, steady in his testimony to it, immovable as a rock." A man who lived that way had a right to say, as he faced death unmoved, "I am clear, I am fully clear."

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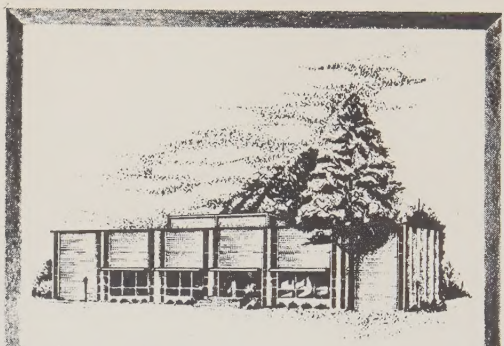

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